THE FRIENDSHIPS of JESUS

M. J. OLLIVIER, O.P.

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THE FRIENDSHIPS OF JESUS.

By the REV. M. J. OLLIVIER O. P.

FROM THE FRENCH

BY

M. C. KEOGH.

WITH A PREFACE

BY

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✠ John J. Kain,
Archbishop of St. Louis.

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TO THE FRIENDS

WHO HAVE HELPED HIM

TO BEAR THE BURDEN OF LIFE

IN UNION WITH THE LORD JESUS CHRIST,

AND IN THE HOPE

OF HIS ETERNAL FRIENDSHIP

THE AUTHOR DEDICATES

THIS BOOK WRITTEN ESPECIALLY FOR THEM.

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PREFACE.

We need scarcely make an apology for introducing a work by Père Ollivier to English readers. His name is not confined to France. He has established a reputation, as an eloquent preacher and cultured writer, that has travelled far beyond the confines of his native country. He styles his book a simple study, which he dedicates to his friends, but we find in it evidence of research and learning that betrays the modesty of the author. The better to prepare himself for his work, several months were spent in Palestine, visiting the scenes that witnessed the friendships of the Redeemer, and the book has received a setting worthy of the characters it portrays. Père Ollivier is profoundly versed in the literature of the age. He has measured the evils it contains and the good of which it is capable, with a precision that few can equal, and he is thoroughly equipped both by experience and knowledge to grapple with the social and religious problems that agitate society, and to point out the surest way of remedying the calamities he so eloquently deplores.[1] These calamities are not confined to the domain of morals, they enter into our social life and have

[1] Cf. Conférences — *Nos malheurs, leurs causes, leur remède.*

acc: 3640

permeated every grade of society. "Paganism which surrounds us on all sides has in particular penetrated our life of affection. Marriage, paternity, the family, not alone suffer from its deadly poison, but love is reduced to its lowest degradation. Friendship no longer retains its traditional nobility and awakes but by inefficacious gleams in hearts that are engrossed by business and pleasure." [1]

The philosophy of the Cynics has been revived in a later age, and its influence is felt in modern life. Spinosa did not hesitate to say that the "natural state of man was not peace but war;" [2] and that "by nature each has the right to do what his strength warrants." [3] It must have been from such principles that Hobbes drew the conclusion that, "Everything is right which is in our power, or which seems to minister to our wants. Fraud and violence are two fundamental virtues, mine and thine do not exist. Danger and fear of violent death, all warring against all — such is the life of man, an existence, solitary, sordid and animal." [4] If we come down to more recent times we shall find the same doctrine propounded by the modern materialistic school. Bastian tells us that "man has neither virtue nor vice, he has but the instinct of necessary and imperative propensities." [5] We

[1] Epilogue.
[2] Tract. Politic., 1, 5.
[3] *Ibidem* 2, 4.
[4] Cf. LECHLER — *Geschichte des Englischen Deismus*, 79.
[5] Man in History, III, 258.

shall search humanistic literature in vain for a solid basis on which the social relations may repose. Pagan Philosophy places man in isolation, tramples on human dignity and ignores the natural rights of all men to equality. Hence we find Epictetus declare that "the wise man should care for nothing but himself; parents, brothers, children and country should be to him no matter of concern."[1] "You may manifest externally the sympathy you feel for one in trouble, take care however that you be not internally disturbed, otherwise your peace is gone."[2] These words of the Roman sage have a strangely realistic sound, for perhaps in no age more than the present has egoism been so fully developed. Self-interest constitutes one of man's dearest aims, and sometimes it matters little what rights are sacrificed in its attainment.

It cannot be denied that the modern world has made progress, but can we say that this progress contains all that may be reasonably desired? It seems to have been rather in a material direction, and social relations seem to have declined in inverse ratio as material prosperity has increased. The law of God tells us to love one another and bear one another's burdens, but the tendency of modern development rather imposes the command, "avoid one another." The acquisition of wealth estranges man from man, and sets up a barrier against social intercourse, that may not be passed

[1] Manuale II. *Diss.*, 3, 3.
[2] *Ibidem*, 16,

by those on whom fortune has not bestowed the golden key. Hegel, the German rationalist could never, in his wildest dreams, have foreseen that his philosophical maxims would be so fully realized as they are at the present day. He taught that "property is the essence of personality, that it is the condition and instrument of liberty."[1] "Without property," says Lasson, "there is neither personality nor individuality, neither will nor liberty;"[2] and hence Sauter concludes, "He who possesses nothing cannot make his mark in the world, he counts as nothing, neither is he of any value. He is like a body without hands and feet, a will which has neither speech nor strength at its command. If he can do nothing of himself, he cannot be a man, for property alone can constitute a person."[3]

Notwithstanding all these revolting theories we find men of the same type accusing Christianity of the destruction of social relations and duties. "Nature has destined man for a social life, to love his fellows, to live according to the principles of justice. It has commanded him to be law-abiding, to do good, to grant to and to procure pleasure for his companions. But religion counsels him to fly society, to hate creatures, and for the love of his God, to sever the most sacred bonds. It orders him to torment, to persecute, to torture, to put to death, everyone who will not submit to its com-

[1] *Philosophie des Rechtes*, S. 46 and 51.
[2] Ap. Weiss, *Apologie*, V., VII, p. 264.
[3] *Ibidem*.

mands."[1] We are surprised to find such contradictions among men who advocate the teachings of naturalism, and one is forced to conclude that much of their writings is inspired by hatred of Christianity rather than by love of truth. We are further forced to admit that, thanks to man's apostasy from Christian principles, *the state of nature* still exists on earth and in this war of all against all, a victim of vengeance must be found, and Christianity is compelled to experience their rage and hate.

It does not require much thought to ascertain how unjust these accusations are. Christianity has a twofold office to accomplish. It must teach man the duty of mutual regard, and at the same time safeguard his personal dignity. We have only to peruse the Epistles of Saint Paul, if we would learn how fully it has executed this task. — "Servants obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not serving to the eye as pleasing men, but in simplicity of heart, fearing God."[2] "You are bought with a price, be not made the bond slaves of men."[3] "It remaineth that they be as though they possessed not, and they that use this world, as if they used it not, for the fashion of this world passeth away."[4] By this doctrine man is rendered free, in his person, in his thoughts, in his conscience, in his will, and the respect he owes

[1] *Système de la nature*, l. 2, ch. 9, apud *Valsecchi*.
[2] Col., III, 22.
[3] 1 Cor. VII, 23.
[4] *Ibidem*, 30—31.

to constituted authority is safeguarded by the inspired counsel he receives. Christianity assures all men an equality of position before God, with whom "there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female." [1] Secondary and purely external differences of rich and poor, master and servant, noble and plebeian disappear in the Christian dispensation since man finds therein his importance and native dignity.

In restoring to man his personal dignity, Christianity has established and fostered mutual regard among men; for "every man shall associate with his like." [2] He must therefore love his fellows as soon as he recognises the same dignity he has been brought to esteem in himself. The doctrines of ancient and modern naturalism make universal fellowship impossible, but Christianity teaches us to regard humanity not as a mere material quantity in which all participate, but as a real and living personality, common to all, by a common descent, from a common father, and that man is not a purely physical unit, but a being endowed with free-will and responsible for all his actions. In the natural order Christianity perfects our social relations, and still more by its supernatural teachings, which destine all men to form one great family united by faith and grace, [3] and

[1] Galat. III, 28.
[2] Eccli., XIII, 9.
[3] I Cor., X, 17.

striving for the same eternal end, not only as associates in the natural order, but as spiritual friends. The legislation of the Catholic Church tends in this direction, in creating the impediments of matrimony. Social relations are thereby enlarged and confirmed, families hitherto strangers to one another are brought together, and further connection among those already allied is prohibited. [1]

Christianity is charged with the suppression of the natural emotions of the human heart, and this is particularly true of the virtue of friendship. It directs man's thoughts towards Heaven, and its revealed doctrines make no provision for his relations with his fellows while on earth. "Private friendship," says Shaftesbury, "and zeal for the common good and our country, are virtues that in a Christian are absolutely voluntary; they are in no way an essential part of his fraternal charity." The doctrine of the English deist has been repeated in every subsequent age, under different forms, but with the same veiled hostility to revealed religion.

Friendship occupies a prominent place in divine revelation, and commentators on the sacred text have been at pains to place it in the clearest light. [2] The Scriptures present us beautiful examples of tender and devoted friendship. In the Old Testament we find its type in the touching history of that Jonathan who loved David as his soul — of that David who loved Jonathan more

[1] Cf. S. Thomas, *Supp.* qq. 54 and 55.

[2] Cf. Cornelius a Lapide, *In Eccli.*, VII.

than a mother can love or a woman be loved: in the vows and tears and embraces which sealed the union of the king's son with the son of the shepherd.[1] In the Gospels, and especially in that one, the author of which has not feared to call himself "the disciple whom Jesus loved," we see the radiance of that tender friendship which the Son of man vouchsafed. Père Ollivier has painted these friendships of Jesus in language of great beauty. He has penetrated into the sanctuary of the Master's heart, and disclosed the expansion of its love in quest of souls. The Saviour being God did not require mutual sympathy as much as we, but being man He sought tender and devoted hearts, to whom, of His free choice, He offered the most sincere affection. His choice of friends was not confined to a particular class, and though we may trace a preference in the selection, the heart of the Messiah had a place for all. Poverty placed no barrier to His seeking love; the lowly, the forgotten, the despised, and even sinners found a place in its embracing tenderness. The dignity of a human soul rather than social position was the standard of His choice. The noble family of Lazarus and the fishermen washing their nets on the shores of Lake Tiberias, the publican and the fallen woman, all were called to a share in the Master's love. Wealth and position had no claim on Him, who came to redeem a world, to the exclusion of those whom fortune did not favour.

[1] 1 Kings, XVIII.

"We cannot," to use the words of Père Ollivier, "be too grateful to Him who has taught us to love, in conformity with our dignity as rational creatures, honoured by a vocation to the supernatural life: and since this should include a desire of imitation we cannot be too solicitous to shape our life of affection on His." [1]

Theologians always consecrate a special treatise to this virtue, which was so conspicuous in our Lord's life, in their dogmatic and ascetical writings. They teach that friendship is a psychological necessity for men of every age and every class,[2] a means of moral well-being,[3] and consequently a virtue in the truest sense. It is, according to Saint Thomas,[4] a special and independent virtue, which serves as a complement to justice. If it is manifested in merely external relations, it is false and has no merit before God.[5] Although Christianity teaches us to love all men, it fosters particular affection, provided this does not interfere with the general charity we owe to all. It has adopted the teaching of Aristotle that "friendship consists rather in bestowing affection than in receiving it,"[6] and Saint Thomas affirms that each of us in this world requires a friend towards whom we may exercise good offices and who in turn shall be our

[1] *Epilogue.*
[2] S. Antoninus II, t. 8, c. 5.
[3] S. Franc. de Sales, *Philothée*, 3, 19.
[4] 2, 2, q. 114, a. 1.
[5] Matt., X, 46.
[6] *Eth.* 8, 7.

support in the salutary practice.[1] Hence the Angelic Doctor concludes with Saint Augustine, that friendships are necessary for our happiness in this life.[2]

The teachings of Revelation and Theologians on friendship have been realized in the Catholic Church. Thus we find the most enthusiastic praises of individual friendships in the writings of the Fathers, and in the lives of the hermits of the desert. We have striking examples among the saints. Basil and Gregory, Francis and Dominic, Thomas and Bonaventure, may be cited in illustration of that tender affection which united hearts entirely devoted to God. Where can we find friendship practised in a more heroic degree than in the cloister? We have only to peruse the historian of western monachism to find evidence of mutual regard the most devoted. "Everything," he says, "invited the monks to choose one or several souls as the intimate companions of their life, and to consecrate that choice by an affection, free as their vocation, pure as their profession, tender and generous as their youth. Thus initiated in the stainless pleasure of a union of hearts, they could again with the sage recognise in the fidelity of these voluntary ties, a 'medicine for life and immortality.'"[3]

[1] 1, 2, q. 4, a. 8.

[2] Aug. *De Vera Relig.*, 47. Cf. Amb. *Off.* 3, 22. — Chrys., I. Thess., hom. 273.

[3] Montalembert, *The Monks of the West.* V, 1. c. 5.

We have then in these beautiful pages a divine model who has taught us the value of friendship, and as all laws presuppose a healthy state of morals, these in turn presuppose well regulated affections on which all true progress must repose. We shall find their perfect type and ideal in Jesus Christ and those whom He called to share in the emotions of His heart.

MICHAEL M. O'KANE O. P.

THE FRIENDSHIPS OF JESUS.

INTRODUCTION.

I.

Jesus Christ, Son of God, is equally Son of man; and if from the first filiation there results in Him the perfection of the divine nature and life, from the second there results also the fulness of human nature and life.[1] We see then in Him a man like ourselves, having a soul identical with ours, and consequently, capable of love as we are ourselves; yet with this difference, that in Him there could be no self-deception as to the object, the mode, and the measure of His affections. For He has assumed our nature, but not our sins, of which He could become the expiator and the destroyer, but never the slave. Concupiscence and error, and the weaknesses inherent in our nature, as consequences of sin, were unknown to Him. He could experience

[1] *Symb. Nicaen:* "Deum de Deo, lumen de lumine, Deum verum de Deo vero, genitum non factum, consubstantialem Patri . . . . Et homo factus est."

Symb. Athanas: "Deus est ex substantia Patris ante saecula genitus, et homo est ex substantia matris in saeculo natus: perfectus Deus et perfectus homo, ex anima rationali et humana carne subsistens."

sadness and suffering, even unto death, but never the dread of failure in the intelligence or the will.

We need not then fear the reproach of imprudence or irreverence in attributing to Him affections similar to those which all men feel, with the reservations which accompany His exceptional personality. Jesus Christ was loving as we: He has loved as we, and the perfection of His power to love justifies us in studying more closely this point of contact between His humanity and ours.

How, moreover, could we incur a reproach in imitating the language of the Church and the Gospel, or if this expression seems more exact, that of Jesus Christ Himself? Not only does the Church say of Saint Andrew *that Jesus loved Him*[1] — not only does Saint John call himself *the beloved disciple*[2] and affirm that he shared the affection of the Master with James the Greater,[3] Martha, Magdalen, and Lazarus[4] — but the Man-God Himself gives the name *of friends* to His apostles,[5] and to him whom He raised to life in Bethany.[6] He caresses the little children whose importunity the disciples feared.[7] He pleads the cause of the publican,[8] of the sinner,[9]

[1] "Dilexit Andream." (30. Nov.)
[2] John, XIII, 23; — XXI, 20.
[3] Mark, V, 37. — Luke, IX, 28 etc,
[4] John, XI, 5.
[5] Luke, XII, 4. — John, XV, 14.
[6] John, XI, 11.
[7] Matth., XVIII, 2. — Mark, X, 14.
[8] Luke, XVIII, 10, and following.
[9] Luke, VII, 47.

of the woman taken in adultery,[1] in terms of exquisite tenderness born of sympathetic affection, such as binds the rescuer to the souls whom He saves. On the cross there arose on His lips ineffable accents to implore pardon for His executioners,[2] and to open Heaven to the penitent thief.[3] He closes His life of love on earth by the gift of His Mother to the beloved disciple, in language so sweet that we are moved to tears.[4] John the Evangelist had learned from Him the delightful appellation with which He so often greeted the faithful of his circle when he wrote or preached to them.[5] It is He, in fine, who has formulated the law of love, in giving as a supreme proof of it — *to die for those to whom we protest our love.*[6]

II.

And we must remember, the question here is not one of supernatural affection only, that is to say, based on the value of beings in the eyes of God considered as their last end; but also of a sentiment entirely natural, of their beauty, their charm, their value, of the relation whether useful or agreeable, which is established between them and us. More readily and better than we, Jesus sees in them the divine beauty of which they are

[1] John, VIII, 10.
[2] Luke, XXIII, 34.
[3] Luke, XXIII, 43.
[4] John, XIX, 26,
[5] "Filioli." — Mark, X, 24. —John, XIII, 33.
[6] John, XV, 13.

scarcely the shadow, the service which they render to the Creator in the accomplishment of His designs, the joy which their utility causes Him, and the profit which they derive therefrom: for all this Jesus conceives an esteem and a love of which He alone can give us the measure. It is true that though He does not separate in His heart, charity properly so called, from natural affection, this latter sentiment existed there, real and distinct, with its special activity and ordinary effects. The heart of Jesus was made as our own hearts; all that we say of ourselves in this respect, we say of Him, lessening it in nothing, since, according to Saint Thomas "the natural tendency which draws us to creatures comes from the Author of our nature,"[1] that is to say, from Him who is God. Let us enter then without any hesitation into the study of this divine Heart, where abides the fulness of love and grace, sacred treasury, from which we should derive our wealth, drawing therefrom in full measure without fear of ever exhausting it; and may He cause us to realise in our heart during this study, the influence ever more vivid and penetrating, of His ineffable perfection.

III.

Love has three principles: *blood* or birth — *taste* or temperament — *choice* or a particular mission. That is to say that we select our friends

[1] *Sum. Theol.*, 1, q, IX, 1, 3.: "Amor naturalis nihil aliud est quam inclinatio naturae indita ab auctore naturae ipsius."

from those who are of the same blood, who have the same tastes, and the same vocation ; nature first, the attraction of resemblances, the congruity of activity, determine our attachments and our intimacy.[1] It follows thence that we classify human affections according to the relations of family and country — those free preferences whence spring friendships properly so called — and those necessary alliances which group men in the pursuit of the same ideal or the service of the same interest. By divers titles and in variable measures, we all obey this triple law. It is the cause of our joy, our progress, our consolation, and our hope; for union makes strength, whilst isolation results in weakness. Happy is he whom a faithful friendship sustains.[2] "Woe to him who is alone."[3]

Jesus did not wish to be alone, even at the last moment, when He had renounced all consolation, and had resigned Himself to the momentary abandonment of God. In entrusting His Mother to the beloved apostle, He did not send them away from His cross, at the foot of which stood also Magdalen. The Son, the Friend, the Master, died before the eyes of His mother, His friend, and His disciple. All His life bore the impress of the same solicitude: He wished to be loved and to give love for love.

[1] Summ. Theol., loc. cit.

[2] Eccle., VI, 14 and 16: "Amicus fidelis protectio fortis .... amicus fidelis medicamentum vitae."

[3] Eccle., IV, 10: "Vae soli, quia cum ceciderit non habet sublevantem se."

The affections of the family were, for Him as for us the first, those which filled the largest part in His life, at least in point of time, since He did not manifest Himself until the age of thirty years. Mary — Joseph — the sister of Mary, her spouse and her children — Zachary, Elizabeth, John the Baptist — such are the privileged ones to whom were given the first emotions of His heart. The Evangelist discreetly glides over the years thus occupied, because it is unnecessary to inform us that Jesus loved His earthly family. To put His heavenly Father in the first place did not hinder Him from giving an honorable position to the woman who had conceived and borne Him in time, and the Spouse from whom she had received aid and protection in the accomplishment of her duties toward Him. "*Did it not become Him*," as He said Himself "*to fulfil all justice*,"[1] and could He free Himself from the perfect observance of the fourth of His own commandments?[2] To insist, then, on His filial love, were useless, were it not for the satisfaction of our pious curiosity, and in this the Gospel gives us but little assistance, as Saint Anselm has justly remarked.

What we say of the *relatives* of Jesus applies to the other members of His terrestial family — in a less degree, it is true, because man is not wont to manifest an equal affection for those whom he does not consider equally near. Besides the brothers

[1] Matt. III, 15.

[2] Exod., XX, 12. "Honora patrem tuum et matrem tuam."

and sisters, children of the same mother, and in whom each of us finds his other self, there are friends indicated, but not imposed upon us, at least by the same title; and every choice on our part, while investing some with particular rights, proportionately diminishes the general right to which others can lay claim. Jesus had neither brothers nor sisters, but only cousins, the sons of Mary Cleophas, and those of Mary Salome — the same that a ridiculous pedantry considers children of the Virgin-Mother. The youngest, James the Greater and John the Evangelist, were preferred by the Master, as we shall see ; but He deigned to place the others among His friends, when He made them His disciples and His apostles.

Patriotism or love of country has, like filial love, its foundations in our nature, and flourishes in the soul as soon as it is capable of knowing its value. But it does not require to be a virtue to become a powerful sentiment, of which even childhood feels the influence. We love instinctively the country in which we were born, long before we recognise our obligations towards it. For us it has a charm independent of its beauty — questionable to those whom it has not fostered — and which we realise more fully when we are deprived of it by absence. We feel that a necessary good has been struck out of our lives ;[1] we desire ardently to return ; we rejoice to re-enter it, though it reserves for us but ruins and tombs. All other

[1] Psalm, CXXXVI, 1–7; Thren, I, 1; Macch., XIII, 11 et 14; XIV, 18, etc.

skies are less limpid; all other horizons are less bright, and, with Peter de Medici, we say of the lands of our exile, sweet as they are to others:

"Non è mio 'l caro nido
Non è la patria."[1]

Age perfects patriotism, but does not create it. If then we find in Jesus, arrived at the age of manhood, all the tenderness of this love, it is because He felt it in His infancy. His tears shed over Jesusalem[2] recall the smiles which formerly saluted Nazareth on His return from Paschal excursions, and later the sadness of the farewell to the city which, far from honouring its prophet, had striven to put Him to death.[3]

Family and country never lose their claims; but they share them with other affections, born of our free choice, at the time when, completely masters of our own hearts, we bear their homage to new altars. For the generality of men the distribution is rarely equal. Jesus was a notable exception in this respect, because He could give Himself up entirely to His new affections, without diminishing in the least what He reserved for the old: the perfection which is in Him is manifested everywhere in the same degree, and this is one of the most convincing proofs of His divinity.

Friendships, properly so called, that is to say the intimate relations established between heart

[1] "Not there is the nest of my love; It is not my country!" (Cf. Audin. *Léon X.*)

[2] Luke, XIX, 41.

[3] Mark, VI, 4; Luke, IV, 24.

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and heart, soul and soul, *begotten of intangible suitability*, as Lacordaire aptly remarks,[1] are in no way impaired, varied though we may suppose them; they participate in the nature of the spirit, capable of giving itself without reserve, and of remaining itself unimpaired for a new outpouring. The friends of maturity take nothing from those of youth, and the tender looks of the old man bent on childish innocence do no injustice to him whose silver locks he still caresses.

IV.

One sentiment alone, however noble and delightful it may be, love, strictly so called, — is exclusive and tyrannical. It separates and absorbs; its distinctive characteristic is jealousy — its end the captivity of the heart, which considers that it is eliciting an act of supreme liberty in substituting it for the involuntary affections of early life. We can have several friendships; it is impossible to have more than one love.

But by His nature and His destiny, Jesus could admit nothing into His life that was exclusive and tyrannical. He had taken from humanity what was necessary to save it, but nothing more: He belonged then to every soul, without distinction of age or condition, not to some only, still less to one alone, and the preferences which He had the right to allow Himself, could not tend to impose upon Him the yoke of an exclusive affection. With His divine hand He could touch this yoke to bless and

[1] "Sainte Marie-Madeleine," ch. 1.

sanctify it; but He never made it other than the symbol of His union with the Church, that is to say, with all souls.[1]

It is this which stamps the friendships of Jesus Christ with an inimitable seal: they carry Him to a height to which none can attain, and whatever may be their object, they preserve the same supernatural character. The most perfect men love like men; Jesus alone loves as God.

The Gospel has carefully noted the favourites of the Master: they are few in number and contained in a few lines. "There was a man called Lazarus who was sick at Bethany, in the town of Mary and Martha, her sister . . . . Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister Mary, and Lazarus.[2]" "Jesus," says Père Lacordaire, "had then in Bethany an entire family of friends. It was there, when coming to Jerusalem, the city where He should consummate His sacrifice, that He reposed from the fatigues of preaching and the painful prospects of the future. There were hearts, pure and devoted,—friends; there this incomparable blessing of an affection that was proof against everything. It was also from Bethany that He set out to make His triumphant entry into Jerusalem; and it was in sight of Bethany, His face turned towards its walls on the Eastern side, that He ascended into Heaven, at an almost equal distance from Calvary

[1] Ephes., V, 32. "This is a great sacrament: but I speak in Christ and in the Church."

[2] John, XI, 1 and 5.

where He died, and the house where He was most loved."[1]

Such are the only friends given to Jesus by the spontaneous emotions of His heart. "There, was the consummation of His *affections human and divine*, in this world; nothing had prepared the world for it, and the world shall never again see but an obscure image of it, in the most holy and most heavenly friendships."[2] Saint John, "the Evangelist of the Heart of Jesus Christ, the object of His predilections," did not owe this privilege to a similarity of disposition alone; he was predestined for the preaching of the Gospel and was chosen associate of the Mission of the Messiah, still more than as a confidant of His sorrows and His joys. He was His favourite among the apostles, but it seems he did not share, as much as Martha and Magdalen, in that mysterious gratuity which is always of the very essence of His love. The friends, *par excellence*, of Jesus are indicated by these words of John himself: "He loved Lazarus, Martha and Mary her sister."

V.

Affection looks not only for confidants and consolers in a life of intimacy; it determines also the associates and helpers in the work to which we devote our external activity. But we do not find in this choice, the same independence which we have just mentioned. Vocation, that is to say, the

[1] "Sainte Marie-Madeleine," ch. 11.

[2] Ibid., ch. 1.

superior will of which we are but the agents, indicates, so to speak, the names which are to be linked with ours: the higher it is, the more imperious it becomes, and supposes a more complete sacrifice of our personal tastes, in the choice of our associates. They must be friends, to bear a part of our burden, and to follow us to the very end; but above all, they must be, like ourselves, the servants of the cause entrusted to us. Hence we ask of our associates much more than of our confidants; and the indulgences, not to mention the weaknesses permitted on the part of the latter, could not be allowed when there is question of the former. It would be senseless, culpable even, not to proportion the means to the end, the instruments to the task, the associates to the work; and we dare not suppose that Jesus did not subordinate the choice of His apostles to the knowledge that He had of His mission on earth. That He designed to establish His divine power by the slender resources resident in humanity, nothing is more easy to conceive. There remained simply for Him the obligation of supplementing this insufficiency by His grace, and to show His liberality in proportion to the incapacity of those whom He had chosen. He must have found or made them capable of union with Him for the effort: and for this reason He should constitute in the equality required for all friendship, as many friends as He should have disciples or apostles.[1]

[1] John. XV. 14. "You are my friends, if you do the things, that I command you."

Perhaps we should rightly call friends those particularly who devote themselves to the same work and share with us its successes and its failures. The Gospel does this, contrary to our habits of thought and language, if we are to judge by the place which it gives to the early faithful and to the first preachers of the kingdom of God. If it consecrates to Magdalen, to Martha, to Lazarus, some pages of unparalleled charm, it has, to speak accurately, been written to bring out the other figures into relief — Peter, Andrew, John and their brethren in the apostolic vocation. It is in them that the Master delights — to them that He discloses the secrets of His heart[1] — they whom He glorifies by His familiarity, while waiting to seat them around Him on the thrones from which they will judge Israel[2] — they whom He invites first to drink of His chalice and to carry His cross, in order to enter with Him into the eternal kingdom.[3] That which He gives to His hosts of Bethany may seem more confidential and tender; but He is *more Himself* in reality in the confidences by which the apostles profited on the course of a life spent with Him, and above all, on the evening of his last supper.[4] His chosen friends are the propagators

[1] John, XV, 15. "I will not now call you servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doth," etc.

[2] Matth., XIX, 28. "You also shall sit on twelve seats, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

[3] Matth., XX, 23, "Of my chalice, indeed, you shall drink": etc.

[4] John, XIV, XVII.

of His word, and the martyrs, the co-redeemers of souls, the associates of His sacrifice and His immolation.

VI.

It seems, nevertheless, that we take useless trouble in seeking to graduate the sentiments of the heart of Jesus Christ. We have already said this heart is that of a Man-God, that is to say, of a perfect Being, although resembling ours ; of a Being in whom we can recognise ourselves, it is true, but as the reflection of His ineffable beauty. We know that He is loving, and we apply to Him the same laws of life as to our own hearts, without ever arriving at an exact knowledge of His emotions and His attachments. Why then undertake what we cannot achieve? And notwithstanding Lacordaire says, "Even in predilection itself, there are predilections, so profound a sentiment is love, that it embraces an endless hierarchy. Can we penetrate this mystery? Is it permitted to us to look into it with the Gospel, and to bring thereto the sanctified curiosity of a stainless worship? I think so. One could not know too well where the heart of the Master was centred, in order to know whom we ought to love most with Him and after Him. If the Christian seeks in the dust the trace of the Saviour's steps, how much more ought he to seek in the Gospel the trace of His affections!"[1]

We seek them instinctively and we find them there in fact, not only to the delight of our imagi-

[1] "Sainte Marie-Madeleine." ch. 11.

nation, but with complete certainty. Mary Magdalen, John, Simon-Peter, stand out from the group of the friends of Jesus, in a light and relief that leave no doubt of their pre-eminence: they hold the first place in His affection. Nazareth, Capharnaum, Jerusalem, Bethany, hold among the places He loved a similar position, and the silhouette of the Master stands out more prominently on their chosen horizons. It is then allowed us to penetrate into the intimacy of His affections and to enjoy them in complete certainty and tranquillity: we have not to imagine, since we are permitted to understand, — with the same guarantees on which our knowledge is based, when it bears upon a man like ourselves.

VII.

We cannot repeat it too often, the Gospel is much less cautious than we imagine; to those who wish to listen, it speaks fully and with sufficient clearness to satisfy their lawful desire of advancing in the intimacy of Jesus. Doubtless we shall not find there the minutest development of the psychological studies of our time, where nothing seems complete unless it exhausts the idea and the expression, in order to avoid any strain on our intellectual sloth, or to guard against the insufficiency of our attention. It proceeds on broad lines, with light touches, indicating rather than determining, in order to allow us the pleasure of discovery, — the most delicate and the most intense of pleasures — with-

out speaking of the profit with which it is always accompanied in similar cases. But slight though these indications are, and however rapid these sketches appear, they are so lively and neat that they are much preferable to long descriptions and analyses. In certain subjects vagueness arises from a crowding of details much more than from their absence: the figure of Magdalen has in the Gospel an incomparable vigour and brightness, even though she occupies a very limited space. We can say as much of several others, luminous and striking in a supreme degree, aided by a few lines or even a few words, whose mystery an attentive mind easily penetrates.

Let us not forget however that the Gospel is above all intelligible to those familiar with the holy Scriptures and the history of Israel. The Redeemer is a Jew, as also are His friends: their temperament, their character, their life, that is to say their physiognomy, are comprehended only by a profound study of Jewish beliefs and Jewish customs, disposed to modification under the influence of the new revelation. We must then, if we are allowed the expression, be of the house of Bethany, to understand and explain the divine guest who takes shelter there, hidden from the indifferent and the indiscreet; Martha and Mary alone know Him sufficiently to appreciate and describe adequately, the charm of His intimacy.

But the confidences of Martha and Magdalen are not the only ones in the Gospel: John has warned us on the contrary that the sacred book

requires a supplement,[1] on this point as on others, and that is why we look to tradition to learn what the Scripture lacks. The early Christians, immediate witnesses, transmitted to the following generation the recollections which these handed on by a compilation more or less precise, according to the tastes of each scribe or of those at the request of whom they wrote. Although these have not the value of the Gospel text, they are nevertheless of great value, and even when dross is mingled with pure gold, they remain an indispensable commentary on the sacred book. We hear much less of the *Apocrypha* than of the *Patrology* of the first centuries. The disciples of the apostles in Judea and elsewhere have almost the same authority as their masters, and those whom they instructed directly, possess little less in our estimation. Such is the tradition to which we appeal when the testimony of the Gospel is wanting: to establish it thoroughly is our principal care, since this suffices to give to it all the force which its testimony brings. The figure of the Master had impressed itself too vividly on those who studied Him carefully, to undergo an appreciable change in the portrait sketched according to their direction and under their guidance. The imprudence even of the *Apocrypha* did not go so far as to pervert this image beyond recognition; with much more reason ought we to feel at ease as far as the martyrs are concerned, since to them

[1] John, XXI, 25.

we owe the earliest monuments of the Catholic tradition.

The friendships of the Master, then have the same claim to historical accuracy as His sufferings. We study them and relate them as we have done in our essay on the Passion, drawing from the same sources and applying the same principles. We have no pretensions to absolute faith, which is based only on dogmatic teaching, but to assent justified by the probability of the narrative and the accuracy of the observations. It is our wish that it may be said in laying down the book: "It is thus that these things ought to be conceived, because it is thus that they should have happened." The pretension is the highest, we admit, but with the addition that we have endeavoured to the best of our ability to render it tolerable.

But let it not be forgotten however: this work is only an essay, after which the field remains open to all efforts with a more just hope of success. Shall we ever have the joy to applaud a complete setting of this incomparable drama, — the heart of Jesus expanding in friendship? Why not, if it pleases our divine Friend? While waiting, we thank Him from the depths of our heart for the delightful hours He has permitted us to pass in the consideration of this Heart, whence proceeds all light, all power, all hope, and we pray Him to render our researches profitable to those who are united with us, here below, in the bonds of charity.

Fr. Marie Joseph Ollivier, O. P.

FIRST BOOK.

FAMILY FRIENDSHIPS.

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CHAPTER I.

The Most Holy Virgin Mary.

> Thou art all fair, my beloved, and there is not a stain in thee.
>
> Cantic. IV, 7.

The first love which awakens in the heart of man — that which resists all sway and deception, and the trace of which we find in souls and lives most sadly poor, — is the love of a child for its mother; happy pledge of first efforts, of manhood's virtues, and of late conversions, — consolation of most severe sorrows, — assurance of hope, even when we expect nothing more from man, and the heavens seem closed. If this love is wanting in the beginning of life, nothing can replace it. The transport which impels the young man towards the future companion of his way, does not break with that which draws him to his mother. The intoxication of pleasure, of fortune, of glory, subtracts nothing from the charm of maternal caresses and confidences. Strange thing! In this respect man, whatever he may fancy, remains always the child Saint John Chrysostom portrays, whose mother is the most perfect and most beloved of

women.[1] He considers her such, and wishes that others shall do likewise. If the *fairy of youth*[2] borrows her charm from the imagination which has created her, much more still this other enchantress who possesses every grace and power! What son has not performed unconsciously this work of improvement, or even of creation, which places his mother beyond comparison, however little endowed she is with the gifts of nature? All love is creative, filial love more than any other, because being the first, the strongest and the most abiding, it requires a more perfect ideal.

In Jesus, as in us, filial love seemed to absorb the first years of His existence, and this all the more completely as it was more concentrated and retiring. The few words of the Gospel[3] scarcely give us an idea of what characterised the first period of the loving life of the Saviour; but they are sufficient, because we know the heart whose movements they interpret. So we are not surprised at the relative discretion with which the Gospel narrative introduces Mary, during the preaching of her Son and during the hours of His Passion. Why dwell on that which we already understand? Nothing was more perfect in the soul of the Master than the faculty to love, and this love could have no object superior to Mary: she was then loved as never

[1] John Chrys., *Homilia* 62 *in Matth:* "Eam (matrem suam) semper quaerit et omnibus anteponit . . . . . malletque illam incultam videre quam reginam mirifice amictam."

[2] Louis Veuillot (passim) speaking of his fiancée.

[3] Luke, 11, 42–51.

creature was, or could be loved,[1] with this special characteristic that she had for her Son the All-Powerful, that is to say, Him who enlists all things in the service of His love.

The most loving of sons may desire, but never realise, the perfection of his mother. He finds her made to the pleasure of the divine will, and not to his own! Accordingly, his efforts to transform her delude but his eyes, if even they deceive these sufficiently for their satisfaction. One son alone could make to His liking the mother of whom He would be born,—could perfect her without ceasing, in order to love her always more, — without fear of any term to the generosity and joy of His affection. This son is Jesus, the Word Incarnate, the God who had taken delight in Mary, long before He called her to life upon earth.[2] The foreknowledge alone of the part she should have in the Incarnation bound her intimately to Him, and to guard Himself in His humanity from the taint of sin, He purified her beforehand from the original stain, and clothed her with immaculate purity. "Thou art all fair, my beloved, and there is not a stain in thee,"[3] He said of her by the mouth of the prophet: "Even

[1] "Super omnem pulchritudinem dilecta es a Domino." (*Offic. Assumptionis,* first responsary of the second nocturne).

[2] S. Bernard., *In Nativ. B. V.;* — S. German., *In Praesent. Deiparae;* S. Joh. Damascen., *Orat.* 2 *de Dormitione B. Mariae,* et *De fide orthodoxa,* etc.

[3] Cantic., IV, 7.

the shadow of sin shall be unable to touch thee, and thou art *the mirror of my own splendour*."[1]

All that it is possible to give to a creature had been given by Him to her who was predestined;[2] and the exterior beauty with which He had clothed her[3] was the reflex of that interior loveliness, whence proceeds, according to the Psalmist, "the true glory of the daughter of the King of Kings."[4] Our intelligence, our energy, our tenderness, are the participation and the reflection of the divine life; admirable no doubt, but whose development but effects a more exact knowledge of the abyss between us and the Creator. More noble than we, the angel is nevertheless still far removed from the perfect resemblance of his divine Author. To attain it we must rise to Jesus Christ, who is both man and God: and very near to Him, — "on the confines of the Divinity"—according to Suarez[5]— we encounter Mary, the most perfect of creatures, by the gifts of nature and grace, the Master-piece of the hands of the Omnipotent.[6]

[1] "Speculum justitiae." (*Lit. Virgin. Mariae.*)

[2] "In Maria debuit apparere omne quod fuit perfectionis." — Cf. *Summ.*, pars 3., q. XXVII, art. 5.

[3] All tradition is agreed regarding the physical beauty of the Most Holy Virgin.—Cf. Nicephorus, lib. II, c. XXIII, etc.

[4] Psalm XLIV, 14: "All the glory of the King's daughter *is from within.*"

[5] Suarez. (In Thomam 2. 2., q. CIII, 4 ad 2.): "Quae (Maria) sola ad fines deitatis . . . . attigit." — Propinquissima auctori gratiae." (*Summ. theol.* pars 3. q. XXVII, 5, ad 2.) — "Nisi ipsa esset Deus, non potest major gratia intelligi." (B. Albert. Magn. *Supra evangel.*, Missus.)

[6] "Aeterni consilii opus." (S. Augustin.) — "Initium

How then has He not loved her with a love unparalleled, and especially, after He had enclosed Himself in her bosom, as in a tabernacle precious as the ark of the ancient law?[1] In loving her, He loved the being that resembled Him most in spirit, even before becoming identical in the flesh:[2] if He has not spoken of her more fully, it is by a reserve of sublime jealousy, guarding His treasure for Himself, as though the notice of others would diminish its perfection. However He must needs speak of her, and He does speak: let us listen and try to understand.

Nothing is at once so precise and so gracious as the formula which Saint Luke uses to introduce Mary in his narrative. — "The Angel Gabriel was sent from God into a city of Galilee called Nazareth to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the name of the Virgin was Mary."[3]

Embowered in green, on the slope of a high hill which protects it from the north winds, Nazareth is a delightful abode, well worthy of its Hebrew name which signifies "the flower."[4]—"It

operum Dei." (S. Ambros.) — "Negotium omnium saeculorum. . . . Miraculorum abyssum." (S. Joh. Damascen.)

[1] "Domum atque tabernaculum Christi." (S. Augustin. De assumptione.) — Cf. *Summ. theol.*, pars 3., q. XXVII, 2.

[2] "Maria propinquissima Christo fuit secundum humanitatem." *(Summ. theol.*, pars 3., q. XXVII, 5, ad 1.)

[3] Luke I, 26-27: "Missus est angelus Gabriel a Deo in civitatem Galilaeae, cui nomen Nazareth, ad Virginem desponsatam viro, cui nomen erat Joseph de domo David, et nomen virginis, Maria."

[4] In Arabic: *En Nacîra.*

is a rose;" says Quaresmius, "it has a round form and is encompassed by mountains as the flower is by its leaves." [1] Neither the beauty of its position, nor the fertility of its soil, nor the grace of its daughters, [2] had up to that time raised it from obscurity: its name does not figure in the Old Testament, and all that the Jews knew of it was that "it is but *a Galilean city which has never produced a prophet*," [3] and that "it *could not pretend to esteem in Israel*." [4] Why? No one knows, and the Rabbis, ordinarily so loquacious, are absolutely silent on this point. It matters little however; God reserved for it so much glory in the future, that it could not regret the contempt of the past.

At the time when the first of the Herods was closing his reign in sadness and fear, the flower of Galilee, opening its calyx to celestial influences, received therein the dew foretold by Isaias, when, his prophetic vision fixed on the clouds which hid the Redeemer, he prayed for the dropping of their mysterious waters.[5] Before Bethlehem, Nazareth merited that it should be said of her: "Oh no, thou art not the least of the cities of Juda, for out of thee shall one come forth unto me that is to be

[1] Quaresmius, *Elucidatio Terrae Sanctae.*

[2] Antoninus the Martyr, Itinerarium, c. V.

[3] John, VII, 52: "Out of Galilee a prophet riseth not."

[4] Id. I, 46: "Can anything of good come from Nazareth?"

[5] Isai., XLV, 8: "Drop down dew, ye heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain the just."

ruler in Israel.'' [1] But it ignored still the gift of God, and regarded with indifference the Virgin who was to bring forth Emmanuel.

By her father, Joachim or Eliakim, she belonged to the race of David; [2] by her mother, Hannah, she was allied to the family of Aaron,[3] so that she represented the two most illustrious families of her people and of the entire world. God, who does all things well, had thus ordained that she should be, even in the eyes of men, the worthy mother of the immortal King of all ages,[4] and of the eternal Priest.[5] A tradition worthy of respect, represents her as miraculously born, since her parents, advanced in years, could no longer hope for issue. Conceived and brought into the world under the shadow of the Temple, according to this tradition,[6] she had not hesitated to retire there during the whole period of her childhood and youth, even to the hour when, in

[1] Mich., V, 2: "Nequaquam minima es in principibus Juda: ex te enim exiet dux qui regat populum meum Israël."

[2] S. Hieron., *Epist. suppos.*, 2, or rather, *Évangile de l'Enfance.*—Cf. Luke III, 23. Joachim, it seems, usually lived in Nazareth.

[3] This is the universal opinion of the Fathers, those of the East, particularly. Cf. Tischendorf, *De Evangel. apocr. origine et usu*, p. 167; John of Eubens *Patrol. grecque*, t. CXXI, col. 1476, et Christoph de Castro *De Virgine Maria.* —(Hannah was, it is said, from Bethlehem.)

[4] I Tim. 17: "Regi saeculorum immortali."

[5] Psalm CIX, 4: "A priest for ever."

[6] "In domo probaticae," — says S. John Damascene, — where now stands the church of St. Anne at Jerusalem. Cf. Tischendorf, De Evangel. apocr. origine et usu, p. 208; Père Cré, La Terre Sainte, July 1892. — S. Brigitt., Revel., lib. VI.

obedience to the law of Moses, she was obliged to enter the matrimonial state. She was not alone in this sacred retreat, for we know that a number of virgins lived there with her, in consequence of a consecration in which ordinarily the will of their parents had had the principal part;[1] but she had come there herself, of her own will, at a very early age,[2] in obedience to an inspiration hitherto unknown in the lives of the daughters of Israel.

In announcing that the Messiah should be born of a Jewess,[3] the prophets authorised in all the women of the chosen people, the ambition to be his mother. None of them would have consented to forego this hope, and this is why the daughter of Jephtha wept, on the mountains, her imposed virginity;[4] why also the mourning spouse of Elcana came to deplore at the feet of Heli, the reproach of her sterility.[5] There was, in fact, as it were, a curse upon the bosom from which salvation could not issue: happy then the mothers whom God had rendered fruitful, since they were permitted to hope for the heavenly maternity! Certainly, they had of it rather an instinct than an exact notion, but therein they perceived so much glory and happiness that they may be pardoned the absence of accurate knowledge.

[1] Cf. II Macch., III, 19.

[2] S. Hieron., Epist. suppos., I, 7.

[3] Genes., XII, 3;—XXII, 18;—XXVIII, 14;—XLIX, 10. — Cf. Psalms and Prophets, passim.

[4] Judic. XI, 38: "Flebat virginitatem suam in montibus."

[5] I. Reg., I, 10 et seqq.

Mary's vision penetrated further and higher. To the honour dreamed of by her sisters, she preferred a total surrender of herself, a renunciation even of the most sublime privileges, for the love of God alone, and of her Saviour, should she meet Him here below. Far from being ambitious to become the Mother of the Messiah, she limited her desires to the service of her who should have that honour, or rather, she always desired to be a docile and disinterested instrument in the hands of the Almighty.[1] And in order to be perfectly free to accomplish this design, she had made a vow of perpetual virginity,[2] thus raising, as she believed, an insurmountable barrier between herself and all maternity — that which should give the Son of God to earth, as well as that whence proceed the children of men.

O touching and sublime error! The other daughters of Sion God has disdained. She who had "wounded the heart of the Master by one only of her hairs," as she had "wounded it by one of her eyes," was Mary — the all-beautiful, the well-beloved, whose happiness the queens of the earth should proclaim.[3] As the lily among thorns,

[1] S. Liguori, *Instruction sur la Présentation.*—Cf. S. Brigitt., Revelat., lib. VI.

[2] S. Hieron., *loc. cit.*, 8. — S. Joh. Damasc., *De fide orthodoxa*, IV. 15.—Petau, lib. XIV, *de Incarnatione*, c. IV.

[3] Cantic., IV, 7 et seqq.: "Tota pulchra es, amica mea, et macula non est in te . . . Vulnerasti cor meum in uno oculorum tuorum, in uno crine colli tui . . ." — C. VI, 8: "Viderunt eam filiae et beatissimam praedicaverunt, et reginae laudaverunt eam."

so was she among women,[1] to the eyes of Him who "had loved and sought her since her youth to make her His spouse."[2] But He would still respect the sleep which wrapt the elected soul: around her He breathed a silence, waiting, so to speak, till she awoke spontaneously.[3]

It was thus that she had accepted the suit of one of her kinsmen,[4] Joseph son of Jacob, a just man before the Lord, and had followed him from Jerusalem to Nazareth, where she awaited the solemn celebration of her marriage. For the custom of the East was then as in our own day, to defer the giving away of the bride-elect to her husband for a considerable time, six months or even a year,[5] in accordance with formalities which those interested, or their parents, wished to observe.[6] The marriage was not less ratified, indissoluble, and the bride would be guilty of a crime if she had violated her sworn fidelity, — the right of the husband was full

[1] Cantic., II, 2: "Sicut lilium inter spinas, sic amica mea inter filias."

[2] Sap., VIII, 2: "Hanc amavi et exquisivi a juventute mea, et quaesivi sponsam mihi assumere."

[3] Cantic., II, 7: "Adjuro vos, filiae Jerusalem, ... ne suscitetis, neque evigilare faciatis dilectam, quoadusque ipsa velit."

[4] The brother of her father, according to some authors, whose opinion seems worthy of acceptance. (V. Fouard, *Vie de N.-S. J.-C.* t. I., p. 52, note 3.) Cf. *Acta Sanctor.*, XIX martii; and Patrizzi, *de Evangeliis*, lib. III, dissert. IX.

[5] Kiddouschim, I, 1. — According to Mischna (Ketouboth, 5, 2) the bride should have sufficient time to prepare her trousseau.

[6] Cf. *Moses and Aaron*, lib. VI. — Conrad Ikenius, *Ant. Hebr.*, III., c. I. — *Apparatus biblicus*, cit. Maimonides.

and entire after the first agreement.[1] In the interval, the young woman lived with her people or in her own dwelling, if the death of her natural guardians had made her heiress of their goods and mistress of her own person.

Such was the situation of Mary, as far as we can judge by the silence of the Gospel and the tradition relating to Joachim and Hannah, who without doubt were already dead at the time of their daughter's marriage. Perhaps she had even accepted the offer of Joseph to secure a protector, after the loss of her father and mother,[2] without hastening to renounce, however, the liberty which custom left her for the moment. Did she live alone or with some relation? We cannot reply; we know only that she lived in her own dwelling and not in the house of another.

Joachim, without being rich, possessed some property, — a house in Jerusalem, on the southern slope of Bezetha, and another at Nazareth, with fields and flocks.[3] What portion of these possessions remained in the hands of the Virgin? It is difficult to say; but tradition has constantly considered as belonging to the daughter of Joachim, the house to which Joseph had taken her, after she left the Temple. It was there that the angel sent by God should meet her.

The Gospel shall give us the sequel: "And the An-

[1] *Apparatus biblicus*, t. III, disputat. 2., art. 4.

[2] S. Hieron., Epist. supp., 18, 1. 8. — Liber I *Comment in Matth.*

[3] S. Hieron., *loc. cit.*, 3—4.

gel being come in, said to her: 'Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee: Blessed art thou among women.' And when she had heard, she was troubled at his saying, and thought with herself what manner of salutation this should be. And the Angel said to her: 'Fear not, Mary; for thou hast found grace with God: Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of David His father: and He shall reign in the House of David for ever. And of His kingdom there shall be no end.' And Mary said to the Angel: 'How shall this be done, because I know not man?' And the Angel answering, said to her: 'The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee; and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee. And therefore also the Holy which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. And behold thy cousin Elizabeth, she also hath conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her that is called barren: because no word shall be impossible with God.' And Mary said: 'Behold the handmaid of the Lord: be it done to me according to thy word.' And the Angel departed from her.'[1]

Eternal wisdom has confided the task of narrating these things to the Evangelist whose style was most elegant and most accurate,—Saint Luke, the scholar, the man of letters, the artist, who used, as a master, the sweet and subtle language of the

[1] Luke I, 28—38.

Greeks,[1] the most harmonious and powerful that men have ever spoken. One feels inclined to say that the Holy Spirit feared to seek a suitable interpreter among those accustomed to the rude Aramean dialect, who had never thoroughly mastered the language of Greek and Roman civilization. Since it was necessary to celebrate the nuptials of heaven and earth in human speech, was it not fitting to choose that which seemed the most perfect?

A comparison arises here quite naturally in the mind. The blessed Angelico da Fiesole has reproduced the scene described by Saint Luke: in one, as in the other, the same sobriety of treatment, the same chaste model, the same ethereal colouring, with a feeling that penetrates like a ray or a perfume. The knees instinctively bend in presence of the Angel who inclines towards her, grace flows from the heart of the Virgin through the hands folded on her breast, and the divine shadow which surrounds her, envelopes also the souls of those who look upon the scene. The Evangelist and the Friar-Preacher had had the same vision and had translated it into the same language; but both speak what the Word, the Son of Mary, had put into their souls, narrating in suppressed tones, as it were, the mystery of His Incarnation.

If the charm of this narrative could be surpassed, it would be by that of the Nativity, where it seems

[1] V. Fillion (Préface de l'Évangile de Saint Luc), citant S. Jérôme (*Comment. in Isaiam*, etc.) — Cf. Chateaubriand (*Génie du Christianisme*). — Renan (*les Évangiles*), etc.

that the figure of the divine Infant should stand forth in a stronger light, but where the sweet countenance of Mary is the first to arrest attention.

The Emperor Augustus having ordered a census of his subjects in Asia, and each one of these having to present himself for enrollment in the place of his birth, — "Joseph also went up from Galilee out of the city of Nazareth into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; because he was of the house and family of David, to be enrolled with Mary his espoused wife, who was with child. And it came to pass, that when they were there, her days were accomplished, that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her first-born Son, and wrapped Him up in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn." [1]

Would one not say that the Word Incarnate voluntarily conceals Himself behind His mother, to allow us to see her alone, occupied with the cares of her virginal maternity? But let us continue to read the Gospel.

The Angels came to arouse the sleeping Shepherds of Beth-Saour, to the chant of the Gloria, and urged them towards the town, giving them for a sign of recognition, the manger where the Child slept, wrapped in swaddling clothes. "And they

[1] Luke, II, 4—7: "Quia non erat eis locus in diversorio." —This word *diversorium* which we translate by *inn (a dwelling-place for caravans or travellers)* has given rise to many singular commentaries, by which the old Christmases were inspired.

came with haste: and they found Mary and Joseph, and the Infant lying in a manger. And seeing they understood of the word that had been spoken to them concerning this child. And all they that heard wondered; and at those things that were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these words, pondering them in her heart." [1]

It is Jesus who is announced, it is Mary whom the shepherds see first. [2] Every soul is filled with admiration of this extraordinary birth, but the heart of Mary alone retains and faithfully renews its impression. [3] The Gospel takes care to bring her thus into the foreground; but it is dictated by the Holy Spirit Himself, that is to say, by the spirit of Him, whom the angels announced to the shepherds and who smiled, in Mary's arms, on His first adorers.

It has often been remarked and justified by attentive study, that Saint Luke must have received from Mary the outlines of his narrative: so that in listening to him we hear the Virgin speak of herself and of her divine Son. [4] Can we not conclude from this that she obeyed a most natural and personal impulse, or that the Evangelist, under the charm of her presence, has put her forward almost without perceiving it? But in the character of Mary nothing justifies us in admitting these im-

[1] Luke, II, 16—20.

[2] Luke, II, 16: "And they found Mary, etc."

[3] Luke, II, 19: "*Mary* kept all these words, pondering them *in her heart.*"

[4] V. Fillion (*Préface de l'Évangile de Saint Luc*) citing Petrus Cantor, Grotius, Wiseman, Valroger, Pitra, etc.

pulses: on the contrary, her humility, her love for her Son, her respect for the Divinity of which she was the handmaiden,[1] even when she was thus honoured, her desire to advance the glory and the kingdom of Jesus in every soul, constrained her to efface herself, to leave Him all the glory and all the splendour. Nothing then in her authorises such an hypothesis: she told things as they were, and if her part in these events has been so enviable, she states it simply for the glory of the Master and not for that of the servant. So it is impossible to tax Saint Luke with the delusion according to which Mary has usurped the rank in which we see her. Even though he had not been preserved from it by divine inspiration, he had been promptly warned by the apostles and disciples, if not by Our Lady herself, to whom his book ought to have been familiar before it was known to the early Christians.[2] To God then, to the Incarnate Word, to Jesus Christ is traced the responsibility of this trick of affection, which would deceive us did we not at once discover its cause in the love of the Son for His mother. He wishes that we shall look to her in order to see Him, that we shall come to Him through her, that the protection of Mary may be the pledge of the mercy of the Saviour.

It is easy, besides, to compare the account of the adoration of the shepherds, told by Saint Luke,[3] and that of the adoration of the Magi, which we

[1] Luke, I, 38: "the handmaid of the Lord."
[2] Cf. Fillion, *loc. cit.*
[3] Luke, II, 8—17.

find in Saint Matthew,[1] Never has anyone pretended to see in the first Gospel the echo of Mary's words: Levi, moreover, had submitted too profoundly to the ascendancy of the Master, to place himself in submission to another, however amiable and persuasive we may suppose him.

But there is in the two narratives a striking parallel. Called miraculously like the Shepherds, the Magi arrive at the place "where the Child was!"[2] It was He who had been announced to them, it was He whom they sought, it was He whom they found.[3] But in both cases they found Him "with Mary His mother,"[4] and it was in the arms of Mary, as on His natural throne, that He received their adorations.[5]

Was it then necessary to mention the Virgin here? It was self-evident that this little Infant could not be far from His mother. And nevertheless the Gospel, which says nothing needlessly, pauses and we have no trouble in seeing why, if we note the expressions of Saint Matthew. "Going into the house they found the Child with Mary His mother." It is because she is His mother that He wishes to bring her into prominence. He is happy in giving her this name, in affixing it to her by the mouth of the Evangelist, in order to

[1] Matth., II, 1—12.

[2] Matth., II, 9: "Ubi erat *puer*."

[3] Luke, II, 12: "The Infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger."

[4] Matth., II, 11: "Cum Maria matre ejus."

[5] Id., II, 11: "And falling down, they adored *him*."

impress it on the ear and mind of all who read the inspired story. What son has not felt its sweetness? And how should the most loving of sons not have meant to experience it?

The same thought inspires the account of the Presentation, where one remarks immediately the wish to bring Mary into prominence, although her Son, it might seem, should attract all eyes and rivet all attention.

The divine Infant is presented according to the accustomed rite, with the two turtle-doves destined for the symbolic ransom,[1] and the priest, who has prayed for the mother,[2] has withdrawn—disdainful perhaps, indifferent certainly. But Simeon came on the scene, conducted by the Spirit; he received Jesus in his arms, and blessing God, he said:

"Now thou dost dismiss thy servant, O Lord, according to thy word, in peace: Because my eyes have seen thy salvation. Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people. A light to the revelation of the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel."[3]

Joseph and Mary listened with wonder to the words of the old man. He blessed them, and addressing himself to the Virgin-Mother:—"This child," he said to her, "is set for the ruin, and for the resurrection of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be contradicted: And thy own soul a

[1] Levit., XII, 8; Luke II, 24: "Duos pullos columbarum."
[2] Levit., XII, 8; "Orabitque pro ea sacerdos."
[3] Luke II, 28—33.

sword shall pierce, that out of many hearts thoughts may be revealed."[1]

One sees with what persistence the Inspirer of the Gospels pursues His design, in giving Mary, not the first place, which belonged to her Son, but a place close beside Him, permitting them to be seen together at a single glance. Thus does love in all circumstances, even when majesty seems to impose reservations upon it, against which it always knows how to provide. In the admirable picture of Raphael, *La Madonna di Foligno*,[2] Jesus is a Child, but the majesty of the divinity is so manifest in Him as to nearly mar His infantine grace. The movement which prompts Him to leave the arms of Mary is almost awe-inspiring, so much does one realise therein the Master of the world; and the hands that hold Him seem afraid to touch Him. However, He is truly hers; the attention with which she surrounds Him — an attention full of faith, of supplication, and of mysterious sadness, — is above all full of love. He supports Himself on the arm which encircles Him, with a most loving surrender of Himself, and we ask ourselves if John the Baptist indicates, by his finger pointed towards the mother and Child, the Lamb of God or the celestial sheep[3] who gave Him birth.

[1] Luke II, 34—35.

[2] In the Vatican Gallery.

[3] S. Epiphan. *Oratio de Laudibus S. Mariae Deiparae:* "O sancta Deipara, *ovis immaculata,* quae Verbum ex te incarnatum Agnum Christum peperisti!" — Saint Bernard,

With these charming pictures the Gospel does not hesitate to contrast gloomy images, those of proscription, exile, and misery. Herod, trembling for his throne, slaughtered the little children around Bethlehem, and Rachel in her tomb, recalled the lamentations foretold by the prophet. [1] Joseph, warned by an angel, rose in the night, and reached the land of Egypt after great fatigue, with the Child and His mother, [2] where at least they might hope to live in peace. Misery succeeds persecution, bitter days of which we have no reckoning, but which must have appeared very long in their painful monotony.

Let us not forget however that Divine Love, which is again revealed in the words of the angel, "Take the Child and His mother," made the journey and participated in the exile of which He shortened for Mary the too slow hours, whatever had been in other respects the rapidity of their course. [3] Three months or three years, what does it matter in such a case? Mary suffered for her Child, more than we can say, on such an occasion; but He was to her a source of enjoyment that no words can express. She suffered to see Him thus

Sermo de duodecim stellis: "Tota suavis omnibus offerens lac et lanam."

[1] Jerem. XXXI, 15;—Matth. II, 18.

[2] Matth. II, 21: "Accepit puerum et matrem ejus."

[3] Authors are divided as regards the length of the stay in Egypt. Fouard holds that it was a few months; Père Didon, a year; Sepp, two years; the Apocrypha (*Gospel of the Infancy*, XXVI, etc.) three years; Saint Bonaventure goes so far as to assign seven, following traditions which we cannot verify.

repulsed and abandoned; but in this abandonment He belonged to her all the more, and the aversion of which He was the object, gave Him to her more absolutely. At Matarieh, how many times in the shade of the sycamores,[1] or the silence of a miserable cabin, were caresses exchanged between the mother and Child, of which the Angels were jealous witnesses! The Apocryphal Gospels delight in recitals of fantastic poetry, which relate how every creature was eager to serve the divine fugitive and the Virgin-Mother: the fawns came to lie at their feet, which they licked lovingly, while the palms bent their branches to offer their fruit, over the brackish waters that had become transparent and sweet as those of the fountain of David at Bethlehem.[3] These inventions are not wanting in charm; but what are they in comparison to the reality? The marvel of this exile, which was incessantly renewed and which filled the soul of Mary with a wonder full of gratitude, was the tenderness of which she was the object on the part of her Creator, now become her Child. If indeed the basilisk and the lion allowed themselves to be trampled, as in the Psalm,[4] her thoughts reverted to the demon whose

[1] There is shown at Matarieh, a tree under which Mary rested, with the divine Child.

[2] The Copts venerate, in Old Cairo, the house of *Sitti-Mariam* (Madame-Mary.)

[3] Évangile de l' Enfance, XXIV; —*Apocryphal Gospel of Saint Matthew*, XVIII, XIX, XX, XXVIII, etc.

[4] Psalm, XC, 13: "Super aspidem et basiliscum ambulabis, et conculcabis leonem et draconem."

head she should crush,[1] in her character of mother of the Redeemer slumbering in her arms. If the palms bent their tops, laden with fruit, she said to herself that the *living Bread*, principle of life, of resurrection, and of immortality,[2] had been placed in her hands, and that she was, with a more just title than Joseph of ancient Egypt, the feeder of the hungry.[3] If the waters gushed or became clear as she willed, she saw in spirit the mysterious source bursting forth whence the Samaritan should drink, never to thirst again.[4] And He, with a peaceful smile, repeated to her that she was the queen of all creatures, as she was the sovereign mistress of the heart of Him who had created them. Where, then, was the thought of Herod, who raged down there in terrified Israel? Persecution, exile, misery, all disappeared in the sunny vision which lighted up her countenance and her soul. Could she still dream of earth, when Heaven was compelled to envy her happiness?

After the return to Palestine, the hidden life of Nazareth was a continuation of that at Heliopolis. During nearly thirty years, the Son and mother lived in a retreat whose mystery has scandalised many souls, because they have not seen the reason[5] of it.

[1] Genes., III, 15: "Ipsa conteret caput tuum."

[2] John VI, 48. 51: "Ego sum panis vitae . . . Ego sum panis vivus, etc."

[3] Genes., XLI, 55; "Go to Joseph etc."

[4] John, IV, 15: "Da mihi hanc aquam ut non sitiam."

[5] The Apocryphal *Gospels* have tried to fill up this apparent blank, and quite recently a Muscovite writer has resumed the endeavour, in a pretentious *Hidden Life of Jesus Christ.*

It was not expedient for the Messiah to reveal Himself before the age at which man seems to attain the fulness of his perfection.[1] In all countries and in all ages, youth is not the time for manifestations whose end is the transformation of a people; it is the time of study, and the novitiate which prepares, with science and power the *prestige* necessary for the ascendancy of reformers. But above all in the East, where youth is condemned to silence and apparent inaction, the Mahdi require the imposing and austere bearing which age alone can give. John the Baptist came out of the desert, at thirty years, to preach,—as David abandoned it at thirty, to ascend the throne:[2] it was a consecrated age, so to speak, and the levites commenced to calculate their service in the Temple from the end of their thirtieth year.[3] Man, in fact, arrives then at his complete development: he is in the middle of his career, between a past which corresponds to his preparation, and a future, the character of which he may conjecture. The Orientals are thus right in not hastening the advent of their prophets and their messias: Mahomet, like a keen observer, waited till after he had passed his thirtieth year, before presenting himself as the envoy of Allah.

There is then nothing astonishing in the

[1] Ephes., IV. 13: "Unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the age of the fulness of Christ."

[2] II. Reg., V. 4: "Filius *triginta* annorum erat, etc."

[3] I. Paral., XXIII. 3: "Numerati sunt Levitae a *triginta* annis, etc."

hidden life of Jesus: the contrary rather should have happened to surprise us. We must never forget, in studying Our Lord, that He was a man, and that He belonged to the Jewish people; hence the conclusion that He was obliged to conduct Himself as a man subject to the laws and customs which governed the life of the sons of Abraham.[1] If this necessity is not taken into account we run the risk of not realising as we should, the words and acts of the divine Master. Even the prejudices of His time, as far as they were reasonable, He respected with a prudence in which we recognise at once the soundness of His judgment and the divinity of His inspiration. How could we then reproach the wisdom which kept Him in obscurity until the hour most convenient for His appearance before Israel?

Mary, doubtless, hastened by her prayers the redemption of her people, and in consequence the manifestation of the Redeemer; but had she not good reason to love the delay by which she profited, and should she not dread the hour when her Son would cease to belong to her exclusively? Completely abandoned though she was to the guidance of the Most High, she was still a mother and should have felt the delays incidental to the consummation of the divine plan, very short.

However, when the time was come, Jesus

[1] Military or commercial life allowed an earlier entrance into external occupation, but it would scarcely occur to anyone to associate Jesus Christ with either of these.

inaugurated His mission by the miracle of Cana — It is, in the life of Mary, the commencement, we are told, of a new phase; not only because it forced her to leave her country and her house, but above all because it assigned her a place altogether different in relation to her Son. God takes henceforth precedence of the man, and the servant takes the place of the mother, as the Scripture tells us clearly: "Woman, what is that to me and to thee?[1]"

If it had been pleasing to the sovereign Master to give to these words the sense which is applied to them sometimes, we should but have had to accept them, — without understanding them, it is true, because nothing would have prepared us for them. We should however be allowed to ask how the Holy Virgin exposed herself to receive such a rebuke after all the lessons that the eternal Wisdom had given her. Could her intelligence possibly have failed her in this instance, or could the past have given her illusions which it was necessary to dissipate? Nothing of the kind can be accepted, frivolous though the reflection may be.

Moreover, where shall we find the lesson thus defined? And since we must reply to the assertion that transforms the Son of Mary into the censurer of His mother, let us go back a little to the first supposed admonition, which is coincident with the finding of Jesus in the Temple.

[1] John, II. 4: "Quid mihi et tibi est, mulier?" Protestants and Jansenists enlarge upon these words, and abuse the testimony of Catholic doctors, whose opinion is very different to theirs.

Certain authors detect, in a scene of exquisite tenderness a painful incident, and if we may say so, as little worthy of the Son as it would be painful to His mother. After three days of unavailing search Mary found her Child, rushed towards Him, and allowed the pent up emotion which filled her heart to escape.[1]

There is nothing more touching in human speech than this maternal cry: "My Son, why hast thou done so to us? Behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing!"[2]

And to this cry which depresses the soul, a severe word would reply, under pretext of recalling supernatural visions! The most ordinary son would have rushed into the arms of his mother, excusing himself for having caused her sorrow, and would Jesus have chosen this moment to repudiate the familiarities of a life of intimacy? His answer is mysterious, it is true, and Saint Luke says justly that it was not understood.[3] But if we do not penetrate its divine meaning more than Mary and Joseph, we cannot however be deceived in the sentiment which it interprets; the more so that the Gospel has taken care to place here the tints best suited to confirm our judgment. It is it, in fact, that recalls the maternal character

[1] Maynard (*La Sainte Vierge*) has beautifully described the search for Jesus by His most holy mother.

[2] Luke, II. 48: "Fili, quid fecisti nobis sic? Ecce pater tuus et ego dolentes quaerebamus te!"

[3] Luke II. 50: "And they *understood not* the word that he spoke unto them."

of Mary,[1] before attributing to her the sweet appellation: "My Son, why hast thou done so to us?" It is it also that represents her to us as preserving the answer of Jesus in her heart.[2] It is it, in fine, that closes the account of this episode by the characteristic phrase where, after recalling the submission of Jesus to His mother, it introduces Him as growing in wisdom, in age, and in grace before God and man.[3] Does not this determine the first signification of the word? — "How is it that you sought me? Did you not know that I *must* be about the things that are my Father's?"[4]

Do these words require a commentary? Let us try one. — "Mother dearest, how is it that you have hesitated about the place where you should find me, and have not come here at once, you who moreover know so well where my heart and my vocation draw me?"[5]

[1] Id., *ibid.*, 48: "Et *dixit mater* ejus ad illum: Fili quid fecisti nobis sic?"

[2] Id., *ibid.*, 51: "Et *mater ejus* conservabat omnia verba haec in corde suo."

[3] Id., *ibid.*, 52: "Jesus proficiebat . . . gratia apud Deum et homines."

[4] Id., *ibid.*, 49: "Quid est quod me quaerebatis? Nesciebatis quia in his quae Patris mei sunt oportet me esse?" — The words spoken to Mary on this occasion have been justly compared to those which Jesus addressed to Zacheus, in St. Luke (XIX. 5). — The word "oportet" would seem, then, to mean, "I am pleased; it suits me."

[5] Cf. Ludolf, (Vita Christi).—Fillion (*Comment. in Luc. loc. cit.*) cit. the Ven. Bede; etc. The Copts (*loc. cit.*) translate the Latin words: "In his" by these: "In the midst of these who speak of my Father," that is to say, the rabbis or doctors of the law.—Others translate them: "In the Temple, or the house of my Father."

Who is there that does not realise the accent? Who does not imagine the caress in tone and gesture? How much more divine is Jesus, if we are allowed the expression, in this filial excuse, than in the haughty remonstrance in which it is so difficult to recognise Him. After having considered the contradictory explanations which are proposed, is it not better to keep to their natural interpretation, that is to say, to those which best respond to the love of the Son of God for His mother? It subtracts nothing from the teaching contained in the reply of the Master, whilst respecting the harmony of character which we perceive in Him. Thus several distinguished commentators of the first order have believed, and we can do no better than follow their opinion.[1]

After what has gone before, we can now judge the value of the repulses which Mary must have had to suffer, at the marriage of Cana, and after the second preaching at Capharnaum.

At Cana,[2] the sweet supplication which had just said: "They have no wine," received in answer,—according to the jealous defenders of the prerogatives of the Incarnate Word, — the severe admonition: "Woman, what is that to me or to thee?" — The whole motive is to believe in the humiliation of Mary, even in this title of respect: "Woman," or "Madam"[3] — following the genius

[1] Cf. Cornel. a Lapide, cit. the Ven. Bede. — Maynard, *La Sainte Vierge*, etc.

[2] John, II. 1—11.

[3] Cf. Dion Cassius, *Hist.*, II, 12. —Aeschylus, *Agamemnon*, etc.

of the oriental languages, of which they have no knowledge. They are unaware that the name of "mother" is given to all women of advanced years, whatever be their degree or relationship with the interlocutor, and that, with the exception of this usage, the word is solemn and emphatic,[1] that is to say, there is less conventionality in the occasion which we are considering. They do not remark the eagerness of the Virgin to say to the servants, sure as she was of being obeyed: "Do all He tells you." Relying on the opinion of Saint Augustine,[2] and on that of Saint Chrysostom,[3] which seems to us a little strained, they see above all the abyss that separates the Son and the mother: "What is that to me or to thee?"

The expression is not rare in the Scripture, and far from implying always, as some contend, a certain displeasure, it interprets often wonder at a difference of views or a dissent between the interlocutors.[4] Once only is it ironical and shows the intention to refuse the request made.[5] So that we can generally interpret, "What subject of complaint is there between you and me?" This would perfectly meet the

[1] Cf. III. Reg., II. 20. — Jerem., XV. 10.

[2] *De fide et symbolo*, IX.

[3] *Homil. 20 in Joannem.* — It must not be forgotten that the Fathers had principally to combat the Arians, and took, in consequence, great care to distinguish the divine character of the Son of Mary; this brought them to the interpretation which, to us, seems misapplied.

[4] Jud., XI. 12.—II. Reg., XVII. 18.—II. Paral. XXXV. 21.

[5] IV. Reg., III. 13.—Cf. II. Reg., XVI. 10.

actual circumstance, and would be, at most, a kind word destined to calm the anxiety of Mary. Several reliable authors have thus understood it, and we might accept their interpretation if we could not find a better.[1] The Orientals, however, employ this expression even at the present day, in denoting their satisfaction when what they say is at once understood.[2] Is not this the interpretation which we should accept, above all, if we consider that the examples used in the Scripture suppose a certain elevation of speech, and have not, therefore, for us the same meaning as those which we employ in familiar language.

A third incident furnishes material for comment,—that of the Synagogue of Capharnaum, the day on which the Pharisees accused Jesus of working miracles in the name of Beelzebub.[3] At the moment when the Master was effectually silencing His adversaries, from the dense and swelling crowd some one said to Him: "Thy mother and thy brethren stand without, seeking thee." Immediately He replied: "Who is my

[1] Bernard. a Piconio, *Comment. in Joann.*, loc. cit. — Le Camus, Vie de N.-S., liv. I. cap. II. — Duplessy, *Corresp. Cathol.*, no. 17, 1895.

[2] Our Eastern missionaries can verify it, and Mgr. Amanton, of happy memory, has given the present writer conclusive examples. In his discussions with a schismatic Bishop, he heard this very reply to advantageous propositions: "What is it to me and to thee?" The delegate of Mossoul had at once understood the wishes of his interrogator.

[3] Matth., XII. 22–50. — Mark. III. 21–35. — Luke VIII. 19–22.

mother, and who are my brethren? My mother and my brethren are those who listen to, and put in practice, the word of God!" From which some hastily infer another rebuke administered to Mary, who seems to have taken the initiative in the appeal made to her Son, but here again the situation is not realised, nor consequently the words to be interpreted.

The warning given to Jesus may seem at first to be a snare, though it may really have been caused by a request on the part of His mother and His kinsmen, alarmed at His danger, from which they wished to extricate Him. Not being able to come near Him on account of the crowd, they passed their message from one to another, till it came at length to His ears, but at the same time to the ears of the mocking Pharisees, the alarmed disciples, and the auditors placed on guard around Him. It is easy to reconstruct the scene, and it is worth the trouble involved.

The Messiah had just come to open rupture with the Synagogue, in affirming His divine mission, — His inspiration by the Holy Spirit, — His superiority over Jonas and Solomon, that is to say, over the seers and the wonder-workers who were the admiration of Israel,—the coming of the kingdom of God in His person and those of the faithful who rallied round Him. He made it in terms of superhuman elevation and power, which created a profound division in the crowd,—some proclaiming Him the Son of David, — others crying He was demented. For one and the other He was a

ruler who claimed authority, perfectly independent of every obstacle, — responsible only before His Heavenly Father, whose will was the only law He intended to observe.[1] This radiant brow, this vibrating voice, this imperious gesture, are of one illumined, but not of those whom an ordinary prophetic or sibylline influence inspires: there is nothing there to be mistaken; He believes Himself, and calls Himself, the Son of God.

But, at the same instant, those who remember so well Joseph the carpenter, Mary, the brothers and sisters of the innovator,[2] hear the words: "Your brethren ask for you!—" "What a coincidence, and is it not He who procured it as a means of retreat, in anticipation of a revolt against His boldness? For, deluded though He be, He cannot in fact be deceived on the impression produced, on the risk He runs, on the future finally reserved for Him in this society whose traditions and customs He upsets. Perhaps He is beginning to fear, and to desire discreetly to find an honourable escape, after the triumph by which He is momentarily elated. A sign could have warned His followers, and their appeal manifests a cleverness which might be advantageously unmasked." We impute to them nothing improbable, and for Him who knows them, the likelihood

[1] Cf. Matth., 17–46. — Mark, III. 21–31.

[2] John, VI. 42: "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know?" — Matth. XIII. 55: "Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary; and his brethren James and Joseph, and Simon and Jude?"

here borders on certainty. Knowing looks passed between them, with a suppressed smile which could not escape the disciples and the nearest of His hearers. — "My mother and my brethren! Who is my mother and who are my brethren, if not those who accept and practise the Word of God?" What is this but to say? — "I am the Truth, and I am come to establish on earth the reign of Truth. Whoever accepts it becomes to me as a brother, since he lives by my life; whoever propagates it becomes to me as a mother, since it gives me life in souls. I have no other family, and do not wish for other here below nor above."[1]

No one hesitated, so clear was the idea. By a singular agreement, the three Evangelists who recount the scene close it abruptly on this declaration, showing thus that silence ensued, and that the assembly dispersed without hearing more. Then, tranquil and smiling, the Master left the house, and sat on the shore,[2] while a cry was raised in the crowd: "Blessed is the womb that bore thee, and the breasts that gave thee suck!"[3]

This was indeed the last word, if one may say so, and the unknown woman[4] who thus gave

[1] Cf. S. Hieron., *In Matth.*, XII. 15.—S. Hilar. Pict., *In Evang. expos.*, loc. cit.—Euthym., *In Evang. expos.*, ibid.

[2] Matth., XIII. — Cf. Fouard, *Vie de N.-S.* — Fretté, *Notre Seigneur*, etc.

[3] Luke, XI. 27: "Beatus venter qui te portavit et ubera quae suxisti!"

[4] Tradition attributes these words to Saint Marcella, the servant of Saint Martha.

testimony to Mary, interpreted exactly the thought of the Lord.

Shall we do Him the injury of calling into question the sentiment which dictated on Calvary the words: "Woman, behold thy Son."[1] We should rather, after the example of the friends who remained faithful, draw near the cross and unite ourselves to the divine heart which gives a last token of its love for Mary. Will He leave her without support and consolation? It is not possible; and since He can only place her in hands worthy of such a trust, He creates for her a second son in the person of His beloved disciple.[2] But to substitute for Himself an adopted brother, He seems to have required the assent of Our Lady, and by the very expression He employed[3] in speaking to her, He attests a last time His respect for her maternal will. One would say a request quite as much as a decision. He wishes, it is true, that she should have confidence in the devotion of the apostle: but He begs it of her at the same time, and His accent is quite different when He gives to Saint John simply the injunction to receive Mary for his mother.[4]

Certainly, the will of Jesus goes further than this adoption of the Evangelist: the entire human

[1] John XIX. 26: "Mulier, ecce filius tuus."

[2] "Matri quam relinquebat," says Saint Augustine, "alterum pro se filium providebat."

[3] John XIX. 26: "Mother (that is, woman) behold thy son."

[4] Id., ibid., 37: "Behold thy mother."

race becomes the spiritual family of the Most Holy Virgin, towards whom each one of us thus contracts obligations of love, of respect, and of resemblance. But in this respect Jesus still manifests that His will is pleasing to Mary, since He realises the most ardent desires of the co-redemptress of men, in placing them again in her keeping as so many sons, partaking of the rights of her First-born to grace and to glory.

Even by reason of His filial love, the Saviour had not been able to save His mother the participation of His sorrows. The hour of supreme sadness reunites around Him in His agony the most dearly loved of His companions; among those privileged by the ordeal, there are still some who are preferred, for whom the sweetness of past intimacy reserves a part in the dregs of the chalice. Could they complain of this preference without prejudice to their love? We do not disclose our wounds to the indifferent, and only the hand of a friend can touch the torn fibres of our heart. In the same way, we make those only the participators of our struggles and dangers, whose life we have accepted in return for that which we have surrendered to them. Mary would have had a right to complain if Jesus had sent her away from Calvary; her place was indeed at the foot of the gibbet — standing,[1] her eyes fixed upon the Crucified — suffering and praying with Him, until the moment when all being consummated for both, they could

[1] "Stabat mater dolorosa juxta crucem." (Offic. Compassionis B. M. Virg.) — Cf. John XIX. 25.

say together to the eternal Father: "Into Thy hands I commend my spirit!"

To the tortures of the agony succeeded the joys of the resurrection; then came the separation, the motive of which cannot escape us. When He ascended into Heaven, the Son of God left His mother to the apostles, and to the first disciples as a part of Himself; He remained with them in the woman from whom He had taken His flesh and His blood; in seeing and hearing her, it was He whom they always saw and heard. She was, by force of circumstances, the corner-stone of the new edifice, that is to say, the Church inaugurated by the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost.[1] She understood all this better than anyone, and resigned herself gently to await the final reunion: but it is easy for us to divine that from earth to heaven, and from heaven to earth, there was uninterrupted communication of desires and consolations, which the angels and the blessed envied, even in the midst of their felicity.[2]

According to tradition Mary lived twenty-one years after the death of her divine Son,[3] which she passed with Saint John, first at Jerusalem—then at Bethany, where the friends of Jesus attracted her—finally at Ephesus, where she found refuge during the troubles of the year 42, and blessed the

[1] Petrus Bles., *Serm. 33 in Assumpt. B. Mariae.* — Cf. Barbier, *la Sainte Vierge, d'après les Pères.* CLVI.

[2] Cf. Barbier, *op. cit.* CLVIII.

[3] Her death is generally supposed to have taken place in the year 58, at the age of 72 years.

beginnings of a Church, celebrated for all time;[1] after which she came back to dwell in Mount Sion, to wait there the end of her exile.[2] It is true that death gathered her as a ripe fruit, which detaches itself from its branch. Love, which caused her to live, was the sole reason of her death;[3] the hour was come for her to rejoin her Beloved, and the perfumed pillar of smoke which came out of the wilderness[4] was lost in the depths of heaven.

By a special interposition of Providence, the apostles were then gathered together at Jerusalem:[5] as on the eve of the Resurrection, one only being absent — the same Thomas, for whom God seemed to reserve the favour of a last revelation.

[1] Her stay at Ephesus is sometimes disputed, but without sufficient reason, in our opinion. A few chronological difficulties ought not to prevail in this case against the ancient belief of Smyrna and Ephesus. It seems but fitting that the Virgin Mary should go in person, to destroy the unreasonable and voluptuous reign of the equivocal divinity, Diana, that held sway on the entire Asiatic coast.

[2] There is no solid foundation for the belief that Mary died at Ephesus and was buried there. The *Revelations* of Catherine Emmerich are not sufficient, indeed, to invalidate the authority of tradition, in whatsoever esteem the visions of the pious Augustinian of Dulmen are held.

[3] S. Bernard., *The Assumpt., Serm. 2.* — Contenson, *Marialogia,* speculat. 2. — S. Brigitt. *Revelat.,* lib. VI. ch. LXII.

[4] Cant. III. 6: "Who is she that goeth up by the desert, as a pillar of smoke of aromatical spices, of myrrh and frankincense?"

[5] S. Dyonis. Areop., *De divinis nominibus,* lib. III. — S. Joann. Damasc. *Orat. II de B. Mariae Assumptione.*

Under the presidency of Peter they paid the last tribute of respect to the mother of God, and laid her in the tomb which had already received the mortal remains of Anne and Joachim.[1] The East has preserved the remembrance of the marvels which accompanied this translation — angelic chants, the healing of the sick, acclamations of an enthusiastic people.[2] The crowd hastened from all sides to venerate the holy tomb, whence came forth also a supernatural virtue:[3] the blind saw, the lame walked, the deaf heard, sinners, touched and repentant, felt themselves pardoned. But these prodigies were nothing in comparison to those which were to seal the union of the Creator with His most privileged creature.

The Master of death had deigned to submit to its yoke, the better to show His power over it: so He had allowed Mary to descend for a time into the shadow of the tomb, to draw her therefrom with greater glory. Three days after the entombment Thomas rejoined his brothers, and asked them to open the sepulchre for him,[4] to look, for the last time on earth, upon the features of her

[1] Cf. S. Brigitt., *Revelat.*, lib. V. — The relics of Saint Anne were transferred later to the church which bears her name at Jerusalem.

[2] Cf. S. Dyonis. — S. Damas. — Juvenal. Hierol. — Andr. Cret. — Apocryph., *De transitu Virginis*, etc.

[3] Luke, VI. 19.—VIII. 46.

[4] His demand was not unreasonable, since the intervening time before the definite closing of the tomb had not expired. The bolts were to be fastened only on the fourth day.

whom they had loved almost as the Lord. The stone rolled in its grooves, and as at Golgotha, the funeral vault contained nothing but the winding sheet. The flowers with which they had strewn the tomb had not had time to fade, and perfumed the air around them; but a fragrance still sweeter indicated the way traced by the celestial fugitive. Their eyes sought instinctively the heights of the mountains from which the Man-God had taken His flight, and still nearer they saw the Virgin, borne by angel hands to the throne of her Son.[1] Then, tradition tells us, the soul of Thomas gave vent to a cry of sorrow and supplication, which was answered by a smile of ineffable tenderness: at the same time Mary detached her girdle and let it fall at the feet of the apostle, — an earnest, no doubt, of the bond which would reunite them more closely for ever. Then all was lost in light, and the disciples went back to Jerusalem, pondering on the happiness of her who was exalted higher than the choirs of blessed spirits,[2] even to the very throne where the majesty of Jesus Christ is seated.[3]

Could they conceive, and in the course of ages, could anyone tell us of the delights and splendours

[1] Abedjesu, a Syrian author (ap. Assemani, t. III, p. I), who resumes the oriental narrative.—Tradition points out the place where the apostles stood, at the moment of this vision, a little above the Garden of Gethsemani.

[2] "Exaltata est super choros angelorum ad coelestia regna." *(Offic. Assumption.B. V. M.)*

[3] S. Hieron., *De Assumptione Virg. Mariae.*

of the new life of Mary? Philosophy, art, eloquence, poetry, have consecrated themselves thereto, aided by holiness, before which the eternal tabernacles seem to open, and all that we have heard leaves us desirous of hearing more, without hope of ever realising our dream. The glory of the daughter of the King is an abyss accessible only to that glance of Love which formed her before all existence,[1] and delighted in her the more in proportion as she expanded under its caresses. It is He Himself whom He loved and glorified in her, Himself whom He loves and glorifies when He makes her the centre of all glory and the term of all love. What words would adequately convey all, if we could understand their import in the mouth which pronounces them: the words that David attributes to God the Father, and which Mary had the right to repeat on earth, in laying her new-born Infant in the manger: "Thou art my Son; today have I begotten Thee."[2]

[1] Eccl., XXIV. 5: "I came out of the mouth of the Most High, the first-born before all creatures."

[2] Psalm II. 7: "Filius meus es tu; ego hodie genui te."

Chapter II.

Saint Joseph.

"Jacob begot **Joseph, the** husband of Mary, of whom was born **Jesus.**" [1]
Matth. I. 16.

The Spouse whom Providence destined for Mary should be, as she was, of the race of David, in conformity with the prescriptions of the Law relating to marriage in Israel.[2] The Gospel teaches us by what succession of generations he was related to the king-prophet. Son of Jacob, his direct ancestors were Zorobabel, who had brought back the people from their captivity, — Jechonias, the last of the kings of Juda, — Ezechias, miraculously recalled from the gates of death, — Achaz, to whom the prophet Isaias had predicted the maternity of a virgin,—Josaphat the holy, — Roboam, whose yoke the ten tribes had shaken off,—Solomon, the wisest of men and most glorious of monarchs.[3] No other lineage in history can bear comparison with this, even before it owned the sceptre: for before it came to David we must pass from Jesse, Booz, Juda, Jacob, and

[1] Matth. I. 16. Tradition attributes to Jacob two other sons, Joachim and Cleophas (or Alpheus). The result is that Mary, the daughter of Joachim, was the niece of Joseph.

[2] Num., XXXVI. 7–10.

[3] Matth. I. 7–16.

Isaac, to Abraham,[1] the Father of believers, and attain in him the limits of patriachal history.

"Assuredly," says Lacordaire, "the house of France is the greatest house in the world. It counts eight or nine centuries of royal expansion, and when we penetrate further back to discover its first traces, we distinguish there, perhaps, some vestige of the blood of Charlemagne; this man who was, after Christ, the father of modern generations, and whose name still remains honoured above all other names. Add to the grandeur of the period and this lineage, that of the people governed by this race, of the reigns famous for their victories, others for their sanctity, others for their literature, — all by their union with the onward march of events which have shaped the destiny of the world for a thousand years: and you believe without trouble, that no royal house can dispute with this, the honour of its rank. I speak of it without flattery, today when the thunderbolt has fallen on the old stem and has left to it in exile, the living scar of misfortune. But so much glory in so long a descent will seem to you as nothing, when you will have compared it with the terrestial descent of the Son of God.[2]

But the ancestors of Jesus Christ were the same as those of Joseph, since it is by him that the Redeemer wished to officially unite Himself with David, as the Gospel gives us to understand when

[1] Matth. I. 1–6.

[2] Lacordaire, LXXIII. *Conférence de Notre Dame.*

it says: "Jacob (great-grandson of the king-prophet by Solomon and Zorobabel) begot Joseph, the Spouse of Mary, of whom is born Jesus, who is called Christ."[1] To Joseph, then, is applicable the eulogy of this nobility which allows us to see in him, not only the first gentleman of his nation, but even the first gentleman of the world.

At the time when we meet him, the splendour which surrounds the name of his race is eclipsed: to the ostentation of the kings succeeded a mediocrity, far removed from even the modest fortune of Isaias the shepherd. At Bethlehem, where Booz had owned extensive property, his grandson possessed only one house, whose site the pilgrim visits to-day, with mingled joy and sadness, at the thought of the decadence of which it was the witness. But why should God leave the glory and riches of the earth to Him who was to be enriched and glorified above the angels of heaven?

If we must credit the supposed Epistle of Saint Jerome,[2] or rather, the Apocryphal Gospel of the Infancy,[3] Joseph was bordering on old age, when he was called to the honour of espousing Mary.[4]

Such is not, however, the opinion which the rabbinical doctrine authorises, according to which, to unite an old man to a young girl would have

[1] Matth. I. 16.

[2] S. Hieron., *Epist. Supp.*, 1. 9.

[3] Cf. *Évangile de la Nativité* (in the collection of Gustave Brunet, second edition).

[4] "Erat Joseph grandaevus." (*Évangile de la Nativité*, 9. —Cf. *Protévangile de Jacques.*)

been a profanation of marriage.[1] It seems, moreover, that the holy Doctor would contradict himself, since he gives as a reason for the union contracted between Joseph and Mary, the need which the divine mother would have of a support during the exile in Egypt.[2] It is difficult to see in an old man a help and consolation for a young woman and a new-born infant. No doubt, the East affords more than one example of old age, vigorous and active, as that of Booz, who became the spouse of Ruth at an advanced age, and nevertheless, chief of the illustrious family to which Joseph owed his origin. It is not the less true that it seems better to attribute to Joseph, following another opinion, a maturity in keeping with the position of foster-father of Jesus.[3]

Be that as it may, he was a just man, on the authority of Truth itself.[4] Another Joseph had made the same name illustrious by his chastity, his prudence, and the high offices that had been conferred upon him;[5] but how much more this one, in the words of Saint Bernard,[6] merited this mysterious name, *filius accrescens*, "the son of all

[1] "To unite a young girl to an old man," said the rabbins, "would be to her dishonour." Cf. Rossi, *Bulletino di archeologia cristiana*, 1865, p. 26—32 and 66—72.

[2] S. Hieron., lib. I. Comment in Matth.: "Ut in Aegyptum fugiens haberet (Maria) solatium."

[3] "Juvenis vel vir, triginta, quadragintave annorum." (Suarez, *In 3. D. Thomae disput.* VII. sect. III.)

[4] Matth. I. 19; "Joseph . . . cum esset justus."

[5] Genes., XXXIX. 7–12. — XLI. 1–39 etc.

[6] S. Bernard., *Homil. II. Sup. Missus.*

abundance," or "of all increase." The first Joseph was only the figure of the second, as the wheat distributed by him to the famished Egyptians was the remote figure of the living bread with which the disciples of Christ would one day be nourished.[1] Thus all eulogy seems as useless to the Fathers and panegyrists. They would willingly apply to him the words of David to God Himself, "Tibi silentium laus";[2] praise, as Saint Maximin says, would take away from the perfection which it undertakes to celebrate.[3]

When Mary attained her fourteenth year,[4] the priests to whose care she had been confided, thought of finding her a spouse. Tradition has never hesitated over this intention of the priests, thus giving us reason to think that Joachim and Hannah were no longer in this world, and that the young girl could, at the most, demand for herself the patronage of Zachary in the Temple.[5] He, in the opinion of Sepp, handed her over to her relations who were in Nazareth, and this we must probably understand as an appeal to their friendship, and not as a final renunciation of his guardianship, as we learn from the Gospel of the Infancy. According to this document, which is very ancient and worthy of respect, the High Priest, or the chief of the course on service in the

1 S. Bernardin. Sen., *Serm. I of S. Joseph.*
2 Psalm LXIV. 2. (*sec. Hebr.*)
3 S. Maxim., *Homil.* 59.
4 S. Hieron., *Epist. supp.*, 4. 8.
5 *Protévangile de Jacques.*

Temple, called together the members of the family of David who were in a position to aspire to the hand of the heiress of Joachim. Joseph was of the number, and was obliged to present himself, reluctantly, with the others, if we must accept the opinion which attributes to him an age little in keeping with the rôle of a suitor. Nevertheless, he was the most closely allied to the virgin, and hence designated as having the first right.[1] All the world knows the delightful picture of Raphael, the Espousals, in the Brera museum,[2] and the story of the rod blossoming in the hand of Joseph, a legend if you will, but delightful, and so probable that one would be sorry to see it contradicted. If the Holy Spirit is not visible in the form of a dove on the apex of the re-blossomed stem,[3] was He not there, hovering over the head of His elect, and pointing him out to the High Priest, who should choose, as a prophet, the guardian of Mary and the foster-father of Jesus?

Tradition assigns the date of this union to the 23rd of January,[4] which the Church has consecrated in selecting that day for the Espousals of Our Lady.

The couple were scarcely united when they separated. Joseph returned to Bethlehem, to dispose of his house, and make preparation for his solemn marriage. Mary, in company with some

[1] Sepp, *Vie de N.-S., J. C.*, I. p. 223.

[2] At Milan.

[3] S. Hieron., *loc. cit.*, 8—9.

[4] Of the year 747, according to Sepp, loc. cit.

of her companions and relatives, directed her steps towards Nazareth, where she should await the hour of her solemn reception into the dwelling of her spouse.[1] The Angel Gabriel soon manifested himself on the threshold of the sanctuary where she dwelt in prayer and work. Some days only, some hours perhaps, separated the moment of her arrival at Nazareth and that of the Incarnation of the divine Word.[2]

Three months later she returned to Ain-Karim in company with Joseph, and there he ascertained with astonishment that his companion was about to become a mother. An indefinable anguish tore the heart of the just man: he knew not what to resolve in such an extremity. To take with him the spouse whom he considered defamed was not possible; to refer her to the judgment of the priests was repugnant to him, for this was to lose her altogether, and the goodness of his heart was opposed to such a course.[3] Perhaps also, as Saint Jerome has thought, the conviction of the impeccable chastity of Mary made him suspect a mystery, the revelation of which he should await in respectful silence.[4] In any case, it seemed best to send her away privately,[5] to retire himself for a time to

[1] Cf. *Kiddouschin*, I. 1. — Mischna, *Ketouboth*, 5, 2. etc.

[2] S. Hieron., *Epist. supp.*, loc. cit., 10.

[3] Matth. I. 18–20.

[4] S. Hieron., *lib. I. Comment. in Matth.*: "*Hoc testimonium Mariae est, quod Joseph sciens illius castitatem et admirans quod evenerat, celat silentio cujus mysterium nesciebat.*"

[5] The Law, so interpreted by the Rabbins, permitted him to do so. (Cf. Maimonides, *Bereschith Rabba.*)

permit God to speak, or the scandal to disappear. But how hard it was to come to this repudiation, after his first hopes!

"To what trials," exclaims Bossuet, "does not God subject holy souls! Joseph saw himself obliged to abandon, as an unfaithful spouse, her whom he had thought to be the most pure of all virgins. . . . What sorrow, to find himself mistaken in his opinion of her chastity and her virtue, to lose her whom he loved, and to leave her without help, a prey to calumny and public vengeance! God could have spared him all this trouble, by revealing to him sooner the mystery of the maternity of his chaste companion; but his virtue would not have been put to the test which was prepared for him; and we should not have witnessed the victory of Joseph over the most indomitable of all passions, and the most just jealousy which was ever conceived would not have been laid prostrate at the feet of virtue." [1]

If Bossuet had not pronounced the word *jealousy*, we should never have dared to write it; and yet how naturally it comes here! Let us not forget, the great Bishop says distinctly, Joseph *loved* Mary, with the most pure, the most elevated, the most supernatural of loves, it is true; but after all, he loved her as a husband loves the spouse whom he has made his companion, the half of his soul, the pledge of his joy and his strength in the future. The holiness of Joseph inclines us too

[1] Bossuet: I. *Élévation de la XVI. semaine.*

much to suppress the man in him, and we succeed in making him a being absolutely above the conditions of our nature and our life. Abundant and efficacious as it may be, grace does not destroy nature, and the perfection of which it is the principle does not go so far as to suppress that which is the very essence of humanity. Joseph loved Mary; she had been taken from him; his heart suffered all the more because he had loved ardently what deserved to be loved beyond all measure.

But we must admire here the disinterestedness of this man overwhelmed by sorrow. He does not dream of himself: he has no anxiety but for the compromised Virgin, and all his thoughts conspired to soothe for her the bitterness and the shame of separation. Is not this indeed the triumph of love, and also of charity, and shall we find in the life of Joseph one hour in which he seems more worthy of our strongest admiration?

Let us hear Bossuet. "In this plight the angel of the Lord was sent to Joseph, and said to him: 'Joseph, son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary, thy wife; for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.'[1] What calm succeeded these words! what transport! what humility in Joseph! Let us leave the conception of it to those to whom God deigns to manifest it.

'And she shall bring forth a son: and you shall call His name Jesus.'[2] Why you? You are not His father; He has no Father but God: but God

[1] Matth. I. 20.
[2] Id., *ibid.*, 21.

has transmitted to you all His rights. You will take the place of a father to Jesus Christ. You shall in fact be His father, in a certain manner, since, formed by the Holy Ghost in her who is yours, He is also yours by this title. Assume then, with the authority and rights of a father, a paternal heart for Jesus. God, who has made individually all the hearts of men,[1] forms today in you the heart of a father; you are blest, since at the same time, He gives to Jesus, for you, the heart of a son! You are the true spouse of the holy mother; you share with her this beloved Son, and the graces which are attached to His love. Go then in good time, name this Child; give Him the name of Jesus for you and for us, that He may be our Saviour as well as yours."[2]

Obedient to the voice of the Angel, Joseph then took Mary into his house, where all the joys of Heaven entered with her. Ineffable effusions placed these two souls in perfect communion: the secret of God belonged to them equally, and their days passed in learning to admire and comprehend as much as was expedient for their mission. Who shall tell of the respect and tenderness of Joseph for Mary? But who shall tell the affectionate deference of Mary to Joseph? She bore in her bosom the Son of God made man, and Joseph venerated her as a new ark of the covenant: he was to be the guardian, the foster-father, the protector of the Word Incarnate, and Mary saw in

[1] Psalm. XXXII. 15.

[2] Bossuet, *loc. cit.*

him the representative here below of the authority of God over her Son. Their hearts were united in bonds that were always drawn more closely in realization of their common vocation: loving each other always more in Him and for Him. Was not this one of their duties towards the divine Infant who had been given them?

Into the midst of this peace and joy burst, all at once, the news that Caesar had ordered the census of his subjects in Palestine, and that his lieutenant in Syria, the consul Sulpicius Quirinius, summoned in consequence to Bethlehem, all the descendants of David.[1] It was winter, and the first rains had rendered the way difficult. Joseph and Mary chose, nevertheless, without delay, the route through Judea, the Virgin seated on one of those vigorous and nimble little asses which one meets in all the tracks of the East, the patriarch walking by her side, a staff in his hand, and his shoulder burdened with provision for the journey. If the legate of Augustus had seen them pass, he would without doubt have smiled over the misery to which the race of the Kings of Juda was reduced. How different was their fortune to that of Octavius, and what an abyss between their future and that of the heirs of the Empire! Poor Quirinius! Not more than King Herod, his associate in the government of Israel, did he suspect the career opened to the Son of the humble woman whose domestic life he had broken in upon, and who should become a mother at the end of the

[1] Luke II. 1–4.

journey imposed by the whim of the Emperor. Less still did he know that his master himself was, in the hands of this unborn Infant, an instrument for the fulfilment of the prophecies announcing the establishment of His own throne upon the ruins of all earthly kingdoms.

At nightfall, on their entry into Bethlehem, the saintly travellers found themselves in great embarassment. The house of Joseph, let, it is said, to strangers, was closed to them, all the dwellings of their friends occupied, and the caravansery itself crowded to such an extent that no place was left for them.[1]

Meanwhile, fatigue gained on Mary, and the hour of her delivery approached; she had to be satisfied with the first lodging they could find, and this was one of those grottos which afforded shelter to labourers and shepherds, with their beasts of burden. According to a popular tradition the master of this poor place seemed at first to decide upon refusing Joseph, but touched by the grace and modesty of the Virgin, he softened to the extent of tendering his cordial services.[2] In any case, at the hour of midnight, Mary placed the divine Infant in the hands of Joseph, who was to be His guardian and protector.

[1] Luke II. 7: "*Non erat eis locus in diversorio.*"

[2] To quote from the beautiful hymn "Noël":

"Je suis le maître de la grange
Et c'est à moi qu'elle appartient," etc.

It is impossible for us to discover on what foundation this belief rests.

Hour without parallel in the history of humanity, whose sweetness God left entirely to the two creatures He had most loved! The shepherds were already invited to the scene of this peerless birth; but the first adorers of the Christ-King, those who first kissed His sacred feet and on whom His first look fell, those to whom His first smile opened Heaven, were not the shepherds, not even the angels whose Gloria was but an echo to the vibrating tones of Mary and Joseph. What did they say to Him in their ecstasy? He alone could repeat it, He who overwhelmed them with happiness, and placed upon their lips the praise in which He delighted.

Then came the day of Circumcision on which Joseph had the honour of giving the name of Jesus to the Redeemer of Israel; next the Presentation in the Temple, with the prophecy of Simeon, full at once of joys and sadness; after that the Epiphany, on which the Magi offered at His cradle gold, frankincense, and myrrh — days whose incidents Joseph, like Mary, pondered in his heart,[1] without perceiving as yet the tribulations of the morrow.

Hell watched, and its hatred was not slow in putting Joseph's fidelity to the test.

"Arise and take the child and his mother, and fly into Egypt; and be there until I shall tell thee. For it will come to pass that Herod will seek the

[1] Luke II, 19: "*Mary kept all these words, pondering them in her heart.*"

child to destroy Him!"[1] It was once again the voice of Gabriel, but it brought trouble and fear, not consolation nor hope. The angel himself seemed alarmed at the peril of the Child: "and it seems," says an ancient Father, "that terror had seized Heaven before spreading itself over the earth."[2] Joseph did not hesitate an instant. In the night, by difficult paths, through the obstructions of the multitudes around the city, at the risk of encountering at every step the agents of Herod, he guided the flight of the Virgin and the divine Infant, with the calm of the most profound confidence in God. Then, when the sun rose and there was greater danger than in the night, when the ill-disposed could be avoided, he continued his journey towards Egypt, with the same tranquil assurance; not that he did not feel his whole being tremble at the thought of the dangers to be encountered, but because he had made the sacrifice of himself, and knew that Providence watched with him over the trust confided to his care. Many nights and days followed each other with fatigues and privations of every kind, even to the moment when the fugitives touched the soil of Misraim, pre-eminently the strange land in the eyes of the children of Israel.[3]

There they might find security, but with iso-

[1] Matth., II, 13: "*Surge, accipe puerum et matrem ejus et fuge in Aegyptum.*"

[2] Bossuet, III. Élévation de la XIX. semaine, Cit. S. Petrus Chrysologus.

[3] Exod., II, 22 etc.

lation, misery and all its accompanying evils. The Jews were numerous in Egypt, especially in the town of Alexandria, where the kings and prefects had given them a privileged position. It would not do, however, to dream of staying in this opulent city where the friends and clients of Herod were in the majority, distributing favours, and capable of all crimes. Joseph therefore passed through the territory of Gessen, crossed, at the toll-bridge of Kantarah, the canal which connected the lakes with the sea, and journeyed towards Heliopolis, where he knew he would find a powerful Jewish community.[1]

The Greek town of Heliopolis was situated at about fifteen miles to the north of Memphis, on the spot where formerly had flourished the Egyptian town of On, one of the most ancient in history.[2] In consequence of the emigration brought about by the violence of Antiochus Epiphanius, the priest Onias, fulfilling the prophecy of Isaias,[3] had here constructed a temple on the model of that at Jerusalem. The emigrant Jews continued to send presents to the sanctuary of Moriah, but

[1] Sepp (t. 1st, p. 251) pretends that this town served as a refuge for the proscribed and malcontents under Herod. It had, in fact, become an asylum for many of the discontented Jews since Jeroboam fled from the anger of the sons of Salomon.

[2] Maspero, *Hist. ancienne des peuples de l'Orient*, p. 14 and 22.—The reference here is to On of the North, founded by the tribe of Anon, (Anamim of the Scripture, Genes. X, 13) of prehistoric times.

[3] Isaï, XIX, 19: "In that day there shall be an altar of the Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt."

identifying themselves so closely with their new country, they transformed it into a particular State, bearing the name of Honion, and provided for the service of the temple with the revenues which the king, Ptolomy Philometer, had made over to it. A strong castle governed by the High Priest as Alabark, protected the district and the town, which had become for its new inhabitants *Irhazedeq, the city of justice*, as Jerusalem was *the city of peace*.[1]

The faithful of the temple of Onias were soon considered schismatics by the zealots of the Law, but a questionable tolerance ended by palliating the endeavours of the emigrants, and the High Priest of Heliopolis was, it is said, recognised as a participator in the privileges attached to the office of sovereign priesthood.[2]

Cleopatra had favoured the colonial Jews, who could almost have believed themselves at home in the forest of balm trees brought from Jericho, and planted by the queen round Heliopolis. Caesar continued this benevolence towards them, of which Augustus changed nothing. In profound peace, the Alexandrians acquired riches, abandoned themselves to pleasure and pomp, imprudently stirring up jealousies which soon burst forth in hatred against them, whilst their brethren of Honion persevered in their fidelity to the law and to the customs of their ancestors. The memory of the first Joseph seemed to protect them against the tempta-

[1] Josephus, *Antiq.*, XII. and XIII. — Cf. Talmud of Jerusalem, *Ioma*, VI, 43.

[2] Ledrain, *Hist. du peuple d'Israel*, t. 11, p. 253.

tions which misled the hellenists of the lower Delta.

It was towards these that the holy exiles bent their steps, counting, no doubt, on the charity which the true Israelites practised among the poor and strangers.[1] Did they find their hopes realised? Tradition is silent on this point; it is satisfied to note their sojourn in a small house in old Cairo,[2] and the preference which Mary showed for the shade of a sycamore, which is held to this day in great veneration among the natives of all religions.[3] It does not state precisely the length of their sojourn, and we are forced to conjecture, if we refuse to accept the authority of the Apocrypha, that the time was three years.[4] But tradition authorises us in believing that Joseph and Mary lived in exile by the work of their hands, — he using the hatchet and the chisel,[5] she producing with her needle those exquisite designs, the remembrance of which lived long among the early Christians.[6] But work was sometimes scarce; sometimes also the payment of their small wage was long deferred. Privations then became more painful, and particularly on account of the divine Child,

[1] Exod., XXII, 21; — Levit., XIX, 34; — Num., XV, 26, etc.

[2] At the present day the coptic convent of *Sitti-Mariam*.

[3] At Matarieh (Matarea).

[4] Évangile de l'Enfance, c. XXVI. — S. Epiphanus considers it as two years. — *Vide supra*, c. II.

[5] Le Camus, *Vie de N. S. Jésus-Christ*, t. I. p. 207; Fretté, *Notre Seigneur*, t. I. p. 123.

[6] V. *The Apocrypha*, and S. Ephrem.

whose misery saddened them more than their own destitution.

Meanwhile, the hand of God was heavily pressed on Herod. After a long agony, which he rendered more cruel by the murder of his son Antipater, the usurper died, leaving his other children, Archelaus, Antipas, and Philip, to dispute over the fragments of their heritage. Rome took no notice of his last wishes: instead of placing the crown of Juda on the head of Archelaus or Antipas, she divided the kingdom into tetrarchies which she gave as an alms to the worthy sons of her client. Still she reserved for herself the right to take back what she had so disdainfully conceded, as the sequel very soon revealed.

The Angel appeared again to Joseph — "Rise and take the Child and His mother, and go into the land of Israel: for they are dead who sought the life of the Child."[1]

Was this a joy that the Angel announced? Doubtless, since he foretold a clear passage and serene sky. But in the country once more opened to the exiles, what remained to them of their goods and their affections? Might they not find mourning and ruins on their arrival? What they had been able to learn during their sojourn at Matarieh was not calculated to make them rejoice, and their native land did not appear very bright seen through the tears which welled in their eyes. If the exile is alone everywhere,[2] the poor feel

[1] Matth., II, 19-20.

[2] Lamennais, Paroles d'un croyant.

much the same, and are indifferent about changing the place of their trial, if they do not see their home in a supernatural light, and trace it to the author of their being.

Egypt, it is true, is the land of magnificent sights and inspiring recollections; by this title it should appeal to the heart of Joseph, a man most capable of appreciating and loving it, though, like the son of Jacob, he had been brought there against his will. The city of Heliopolis itself should have pleased him, because it had been founded by one of the grandsons of that Noah whom he numbered among his direct ancestors,[1] because the knowledge of primitive traditions was for a long time preserved there,[2] and because it was the country of Aseneth, the virgin from whom were born Ephraim and Manasses, the sons of his illustrious namesake.[3] Beside him flowed the Nile, whose streams had watered the flocks of Jacob, borne the cradle of Moses, and elicited the admiration of Isaias.[4] On the horizon, empurpled by the setting sun, stood out the grand silhouettes of the Pyramids and the Sphinx —enigmas of stone, whose riddle was known but to those who preserved the correct notions

[1] Genes., X, 6 and 13: "*And the son of Cham: Chus, and Mesraim . . . . Mesraim begot Ludim and Anamim.*"

[2] Maspero, *Hist. ancienne*, p. 14 and 22. — Cf. Herodotus, II, 111, 59.

[3] Genes., XLI, 45: "*And gave him to wife Aseneth the daughter of Putiphare priest of Heliopolis.*"

[4] Isaï., XXIII, 3: "*The seed of the Nile in many waters, the harvest of the river is her revenue: and she is become the mart of the nations.*"

of God, of the world, and of humanity. Around it, in the far distance, extended the pasture lands of Gessen, where centuries had seen successive generations of shepherds, sons of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, with varying fortunes, until the day of the first pasch and the exodus for the Promised Land. It was there that the Hebrews had built Ramesses and Pithom,[1] from there they had set out towards the Red Sea, carrying with them the spoils of Egypt, and pursued by Menephtah, the Pharaoh destined to perish in the waves. The land, the waters, the monuments, and the men, all appealed to his imagination, his mind and his heart: who could believe him to be untouched and unsympathetic?

But he was employed in thinking, in studying, in loving, and in serving! What could the world say to him while he contemplated, sleeping in the arms of the Virgin-Mother, the King of heaven and earth, clothed in human form and confided to his care? Mystery, more profound than that of the pyramids! Spectacle, more entrancing, than that of the sages of Heliopolis! To this hidden God who stooped to require his prudence, he did not know if he showed more respect or love. What did it matter then, to go or to return, provided that he was docile to the voice whose formidable power he recognised in the indistinct utterances of the Infant lips! He had fled from Palestine, less to preserve than to obey Him: now he returned to Palestine to fulfil the prophecy which said of

[1] Ramesses (*Tell-el-Maskhouta*); — Pithom (*Tell-el-Kebir.*)

Him: "I have recalled my Son from Egypt."[1] As Saint Augustine has said of the blessed old man, Simeon: "He carried the Child, but it was the Child who guided him."[2]

All the routes were not equally easy to traverse; far otherwise. "Strange state," says Bossuet; "strange state for a poor artisan, who saw himself suddenly banished, and why? Because he is the guardian of Jesus, and has Him in his company. Before He was born, he and his holy spouse lived poorly, but tranquilly, in their home, gaining their livelihood quietly by the labour of their hands; but as soon as Jesus is given to them, there is no more repose. However, Joseph was submissive, and did not complain of this troublesome Child, who brought them but persecution: he sets out, he goes into Egypt where he has no home, without knowing when he shall return to his country, to his workshop, to his poor dwelling. We do not possess Jesus for nothing, we must bear a part in His trials."[3]

The re-entry into the Holy Land was a cross added to so many others. On his approach to Bethlehem, where Joseph naturally thought of taking up his abode, he learned of the installation of Archelaus as tetrarch of Judea. The son was the reproduction of the father, and it would have been

[1] Osee, XI, 1: "Ex Egypto vocavi Filium meum."

[2] S. Augustine, *Serm. XIII de Tempore;* "Simeon senex ferebat Christum infantem: Christus regebat Simeonis senectutem."

[3] III. *Élévation de la XIX. semaine.*

folly to trust him. The abode of Bethlehem was then interdicted to the descendants of David, and the returning exiles, avoiding Jerusalem, took their way towards Nazareth to establish themselves in the House of Mary.[1] All that was done by the order of the Most High, which Joseph received in a dream, — "in order," says Saint Matthew, "that he should fulfil the words of the prophets: He shall be called the Nazarean."

Then recommenced for the holy family the former life of Matarieh: Joseph retook his implements of carpentry, Mary her needle. Days succeeded days, years to years, without any apparent change, unless perhaps to accentuate more and more the poverty in which they had already lived. This at least we are allowed to conclude from the condition in which we see the Son of Mary later on, without a stone whereon to lay His head,[2] even in the country where His parents had possessed a dwelling, fields, and flocks.

But during these days and years the Child grew, advancing in wisdom, in years, and in grace before God and man,[3] under the care of those to whom He was subject,[4] in all the spontaneity of His heart.

[1] Matth., II, 22-23: "*Audiens autem quod Archelaus regnaret in Judaea pro Herode, timuit illo ire: et admonitus in somnis, secessit in partes Galileae, et veniens habitavit in civitate quae vocatur Nazareth.*"

[2] Luke, IX, 58: "*Filius autem hominis non habet ubi caput reclinet.*"

[3] Luke, II, 52: "*Et Jesus proficiebat et sapientia et aetate et gratia, apud Deum et homines.*

[4] Luke, II, 51: "*Et erat subditus illis.*"

Such is, in fact, the doctrine of Saint Thomas, who does not fear to attribute to the lessons of Mary a share in this advancement of Jesus in wisdom and in grace.[1] Not that He could receive anything or acquire anything, properly speaking, but all activity becomes perfect by practice, in Jesus as in all men, and Mary presided over this work as a mother, by her instructions and direction. We can affirm the same of Joseph, and difficult though it is for us to establish harmony between the knowledge acquired by Jesus since His conception, and its growth which we conceive as a consequence of the perfection of His organic developement, it is none the less permitted us to congratulate the parents of Jesus on the education which He received. This is the saying of Bossuet,[2] and we cannot find another more suitable or better adapted.

God does not allow Himself to be outdone in generosity, and the solicitude of Joseph for his divine pupil was repaid by the most lively gratitude, or we should rather say, by the most ardent love, for gratitude does not give enough in such a case. Jesus was not only submissive, according to the gospel taken in its strictest sense, He gave Himself entirely to him who reserved nothing for himself in conformity with the promise made to the Father of believers: "It is I who will be thy

[1] *Summ. theol.*, 3, q. VII, 12 ad 3m; — q. XII, 1 et 2; — q. XV, 8.

[2] VIII. Élévation de la XX. semaine.

recompense, greater than thou shalt be able to determine." [1]

Is it not a delightful picture, this interior of Nazareth, in spite of the poverty seated on the threshold and at the hearth? In the transparent shade of the workshop, a man old before his time, but with serene brow, bright eyes, smiling mouth, works in wood and iron,[2] as a clever and conscientious artisan. Nearer the threshold, in the light, a young woman of incomparable beauty and angelic modesty turning her spindle with graceful gesture, whilst watching the play of a Child who resembles her and who returns her smile. The peace of Heaven pervades this dwelling guarded by angels, and the Holy Spirit rests on the heads of those who inhabit it. Jesus! Mary! Joseph! What names, and of what joy are they not the symbols! O Master! God hidden from all, except to these two blessed beings, how happy are those whom Thou hast thus loved![3] But also how worthy they were of being so, and how Thou shouldst delight in their familiarity!

In the course of the years that elapsed between the return of Joseph and his death, only once does the Gospel speak of him, at the time of the first journey which the divine Child made to the Temple, accompanied by His mother and foster-father. Nothing is more interesting and instruc-

[1] Genes., XV, 1: "Ego protector tuus sum et merces tua magna nimis."

[2] "*Faberlignarius.*"

[3] Eccles., XLVIII. 11: "*Blessed are they that saw thee, and were honoured with thy friendship.*"

tive than the story told by Saint Luke of the events of this journey.

Every year, the parents of Jesus went up to Jerusalem for the solemn day of the Pasch. When He had attained the age of twelve years, they went there together. The eight days over, they returned on their way, but the Child Jesus remained at Jerusalem unknown to His parents. They, believing Him to be with some of their party in the caravan, made a day's journey, at the end of which they enquired for Him in vain among their kinsmen and friends, and not finding him, they returned (from Bireh)[1] to Jerusalem to seek Him. After three days, they found Him in the Temple seated among the doctors, listening, and in turn interrogating them, and all the auditors were astonished at His prudence and learning. The sight of Him filled them with admiration, and His mother said to Him: — "Son, why hast thou done so to us? Behold, thy father and I have sought Thee sorrowing. And He said to them: How is it that you sought me? Did you not know that I must be about the things that are my Father's? And they understood not the word that he spoke unto them."[2]

We have not to prove here that the customs of the Jews warranted the security which Mary and Joseph felt during the first day, irrespective of the special interposition of Providence. We shall be better employed in considering the anguish of the

[1] The Bar-Ramath of Josue (XIX. 8), according to Sepp.

[2] Luke II, 41–50.

holy couple when they ascertained the absence of Jesus, their fruitless search during three days, and their admiration, mingled with gladness, when they perceived Him in the Great School,[1] seated in the midst of the doctors. Let us re-construct the scene, such as it should appear to us.

While Joseph stifled a cry of joy Mary rushed towards Jesus, and pressing Him to her heart, allowed to escape her this exclamation which revealed all her soul : — "My Son, why hast thou done so to us?" The maternal love which manifests itself first, does not, however, allow her to forget that she is not the only one who loves this Child; there are two whom He has grieved, and as if she feared He would not understand, she accentuates the thought: — "Your father and I have sought you !"

No amount of words could ever express so well the love which united them, and were we reduced to this single proof of the tenderness of Jesus for His foster-father, it would exceed even all that we could desire.

. . . "Your father and I," said Mary, "we were in trouble, and we do not understand how you, the most loving of sons, have thus tortured our hearts." And He in answer, with His sweet, grave smile: . . . "Poor dear parents! You who know me so well, you could, then, believe in my wish to give

[1] Perhaps the hall of Gazith. — V. Lightfoot, *Hor. hebraicae, in Lucam;* — Kitto, *Cyclopaedia,* V, Sanhedrim; — Fillion, *in Lucam, loc. cit.;* — Fretté, *Notre Seigneur Jésus-Christ,* etc.

you pain! Did you not know that if I left you for an instant, it would be to work for the glory of my heavenly Father? Am I less your child for having placed you, for the moment, second to my Father who is your Father, and my God who is your God."[1] And to prove to them that they had not lost any of His love, He went down with them at once to Nazareth, where He again resumed His life of filial obedience: *Et erat subitus illis.*[2]

How can anyone attribute to the words of Jesus an accent of severity, almost of disdain, while they breathe, on the contrary, so ardent a desire to console and gladden?

Listen to Bossuet's comment on the words of the divine Master: "Did you not know that I must be about the things that are my Father's?" "Is it that He disowns Mary, who had called Joseph His father? Certainly not; but He recalls to them the sweet remembrance of His true Father who is God, whose will should engage His attention . . . . . It was the will of His father that He should then give an example of the wisdom with which He was filled, and which He came to declare, and of the superiority with which He should look upon His terrestial parents, without regard to flesh and blood—their master by right, subject to them by dispensation."[3]

"And they understood not the word that He

[1] John XX. 17. — Cf. Ven. Bede, S. Bonaventure, S. Bernard, etc.

[2] Luke, II. 51.

[3] Bossuet, VI. *Élévation de la XX. semaine.*

said to them." Let us not limit unseasonably the text of the Gospel. It was said not only of Joseph, but even of Mary herself, that they understood not what Jesus wished to say. Mary understood, without doubt, what He said of God, His Father, since the angel had taught her this mystery; what she did not understand as thoroughly as she should, was the business of His Father, of which He spoke . . . . She was not in the least curious; she dwelt in submission, which is better than all knowledge . . . .[1]

Joseph imitated Mary in her reserve and submission: like her, he was content to look on, to meditate, to study under every aspect these impenetrable mysteries, asking of God to unfold them when He would, and as much as He would. He knew better than any other that he who does the will of the heavenly Father advances himself in the knowledge of the teaching of the Son.[2]

Meanwhile, Jesus having emerged from childhood, had no longer need of the same protection; age had made Him a man remarkable for vigour and beauty, as we are told by the ancient Fathers.[3] Joseph's task, then, was accomplished, and he also could sing his *Nunc dimittis*. But to enter into the peace of death, he must break for the moment the ties of an unparalleled affection, and sweet though the hope was of meeting again in heaven,

[1] Id. *ibid.*, VII. Élévation.

[2] John VII. 17.

[3] S. Jerome, S. John Chrysostom, Nicephorus, S. John Damascene, etc.

in the consummation of happiness and glory, those whom he had loved here below in sadness and humiliation, it was impossible not to hesitate before the sacrifice. The Apocryphal Life of Joseph represents him trembling and lamenting in the terrors of agony, like to many other blessed whom God had tried bitterly at the last hour, to complete their purification and consummate their sanctity. It is a pious phantasy, and we find the reality but in these words wherein the dying man salutes the entry of Jesus: "I salute Thee many times, O my beloved Son! Pain and the fear of death are already upon me, but as soon as I heard Thy voice my soul tasted repose. O Jesus, my consoler! Jesus, the liberator of my soul! Jesus my protector! Jesus, whose name is so sweet to my mouth, hearken to me, Thy servant who venerates Thee in all humility, and who shed his tears before Thee, my Lord and my God."[1]

The Gospel is silent on the last moments of the just man. Why? Bossuet will answer us: "If it is the determination of the eternal Father that His Son should be hidden from the world, and that Joseph should be hidden with Him, let us adore the secrets of His Providence without troubling ourselves to seek their solution."[2]

Yes, it was the ostensible design of the Father not to put Joseph forward, except in so far as the service of His divine Son claimed him: and Joseph was himself marvellously adapted for this design,

[1] *Hist. de Joseph le charpentier*, ch. XVI et XVII.
[2] *Panégyrique de Saint Joseph*, III. partie.

as soon as he knew it, and as long as he had been able to serve Him. Now he was no longer of use, and could disappear without anyone's notice, except the two souls whom silence and estrangement had so closely drawn to him. For their consolation and his own, he had the assurance of the day when they would be reunited for eternity. But if, in his humility, he dared to lay claim to nothing but the joy of that reunion, the angels, charged to receive his soul, said to one another with transports of holy jealousy: "Ah, certainly, he is not of those who have received their recompense in this world; that is why he shall be conspicuous hereafter, because he has not already appeared so; he shall be resplendant then because he has not shone in obscurity. God shall repair his hidden life, and his glory shall be all the greater because it has been reserved for eternity."[1]

The Arabian author of the *History of Joseph the Carpenter* — an old legend anterior to the fourth century,[2] makes Our Lord Jesus Christ say to the holy patriarch when assisting at his death-bed: "Whoever shall write the history of thy life, of thy trials, of thy separation from the world, and these discourses of My mouth, him will I confide to

[1] Bossuet, *Panégyrique de Saint Joseph*, III. partie.

[2] G. Wallin, a Swedish scholar, published it in 1722, at Leipzic, from a manuscript in the royal Library at Paris. Father Isidore de Isolanis, a Dominican, knew of it and mentioned it two centuries before in his *Summa de donis S. Josephi*. There seems to have been an edition in Hebrew from which a latin translation was made in the fourteenth century. (V. G. Brunet, *Les Évangiles apocryphes*.)

thy keeping, as long as he shall dwell in this life. When his soul shall leave his body and he must quit this world, I will burn the record of his sins, and I will inflict no punishment on him in the day of judgment, but he shall traverse the sea of fire and shall pass over it without pain and without hindrance.'"[1]

With the old scribe whose footsteps we have followed in attempting the praises of Saint Joseph, we close our study by this act of thanksgiving. "When we heard these words of Our Saviour we rejoiced, and gave ourselves up to gladness and offered all glory and praise to Our Lord, God, and Redeemer, Jesus Christ, to whom are due honour, dominion, gratitude, and thanks, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, now, and at all times, for ever and ever."[2] Amen.

[1] Op. cit. c. XXVI.
[2] Op. cit. c. XXXII.

Chapter III.

The Brothers and Sisters of Jesus-Christ.

"And His brethren James, and Joseph, and Simon and Jude? And His sisters, are they not all with us?"
Matt. XIII, 55–56.

The principal share of family affection obviously belongs to the father and mother, as to the authors of the life whose first indication is a smile, in which we recognise an act of filial love.

"Incipe, parve puer, risu cognoscere matrem."[1]

But this smile, and all those which follow from infancy to old age, seek not only the approbation of the mother; a share is also reserved for those who, born of the same parents — our brothers and sisters, are of our flesh and blood. The affection of which they are the object has not the same character, since it presupposes neither subordination nor deference, but rather an equality which is akin to true friendship. The differences of age, whilst assigning a kind of hierarchy among the children of the same father, do not in any way diminish the great law of resemblance on which a life of affection is based. This is why a special tenderness generally marks the relations between brothers, as long as contradictory interests do

[1] Virgil, *Bucolics*, eclogue, IV. *Ad Pollionem*.

not intervene to cause trouble, which but too often happens. The choice which, at an early age, creates intimacy between children of the same family, namely, a particular friendship, does not hinder the confidence nor the devotion by which all benefit. Experience also teaches us that, if a friend is sometimes preferable to a brother,[1] we more frequently find in our brother, the most loving, the most faithful, as well as the oldest of our friends. The wise man, in extolling friendship, justly maintains the rights of brotherhood: "The brother supported by his brother is like a strong place; their agreement resembles the bolts which close the gates of a city."[2]

The Gospel, which manifests Jesus Christ fulfilling the duties of filial love towards His mother and foster-father, cannot do so as regards His fraternal love, since the only Son of the Eternal Father was also the only Son of the Most Holy Virgin. The prophet had long foretold it: the door through which the Prince of Peace passed on His entrance into this world, should remain closed to all others,[3] and all tradition repeats it; Mary, a virgin before the conception of the Word, a virgin at the hour of the divine birth, remains a virgin

[1] Prov., XVIII, 24: "Vir amabilis ad societatem magis amicus erit quam frater."

[2] Id, *ibid*, 19: "Frater qui adjuvatur a fratre quasi civitas firma: et judicia quasi vectes urbium."

[3] Ezech., XLIV, 2: "Porta haec clausa erit: non aperietur et vir non transibit per eam. Quoniam Dominus Deus Israël ingressus est per eam; eritque clausa principi."

for ever.[1] If the title of first-born[2] given to Jesus has deceived certain minds, it applies only in reality to the fact of a birth which no other preceeds, according to the custom of the Israelites, and to the special consecration which made the first child of all Jewish women the gift of God.[3] All the commentaries prejudicial to the virginity of Mary are based on a false interpretation of the text, — whether the error arises from insufficent knowledge, or is caused by bias against the divinity of Jesus Christ. Nothing is easier to demonstrate, even when we content ourselves with only the testimony of the Gospel, but much more so when we corroborate that testimony by tradition and history.

The four Gospels make several allusions to the brothers and sisters of the Lord,[4] with a simplicity which leaves no doubt of the impression experienced by the sacred writers and the readers to whom their books were addressed. Evidently they did not conceive the possibility of a scandal, still less any ambiguity. What they say was known to all, intelligible to all, acceptable to all. How then

[1] "Virgo concepit, virgo peperit, virgo post partum illibata permansit." S. Augustine *Sermo 13 in Natali Domini:* Virgo concipiens, virgo pariens, virgo moriens."—Ven. Bede, *Exposit. litter. ad* Hebraeos, c. 12.

[2] Matth., I, 25: "Peperit filium suum *primogenitum*." — Cf. Lucian. *Daemonax*, 29; — *Toldos Jeschu* (ap. Waggenseil, 11).

[3] Exod., XIII, 2: "Sanctifica mihi omne *primogenitum* quod aperit vulvam in filiis Israël."

[4] Matth., XII, 46–47, and XIII, 55; — Mark, III, 31–32. Luke VIII, 19–20; John II, 12 and VII, 3, 5, and 10.

can we fail to conclude immediately that there was a misunderstanding on the part of those who pretend to see in the brothers and sisters of Jesus, the children of the Virgin Mary?

But here it is not a question of presumption, we must have absolute certainty. That is why we merely mention the use in Scripture of the word "brother" in the sense of "relation, more or less close,"[1] a sense which however, it sometimes has in classical antiquity and even in certain modern languages.[2] We may dismiss secondary considerations, since we have an abundance of proofs of the first order.

According to Saint Matthew, the brothers of Jesus were called James, Joseph, Jude, and Simon.[3] But, according to the same Saint Matthew; and Saint Mark — James, (surnamed the Less) and Joseph were brothers,[4] both sons of the wife of Cleophas, (one of the Marys whom Saint John makes the sister of the Holy Virgin).[5] They are then only the cousins of Jesus, and consequently the nephews of His mother.

According to Saint Luke and the Acts[6] and

[1] Genes., XIII, 8 and 11; — XIV, 14; — XX, 2 and 5; — Num., XX, 14 etc.

[2] In Spanish, for instance, imitating Greek and Latin.

[3] Matth, XIII, 55; "Et fratres ejus Jacobus et Joseph, Simon et Judas."

[4] Matth., XXVII, 56; — Mark, XV, 40.

[5] John XIX, 25: "Soror matris ejus, Maria Cleophae."

[6] Luke VI, 16: "Judam Jacobi;" — Act., 1, 13: "Judas Jacobi."

what is still better — according to himself, Jude[1] was brother of James, whom Saint Paul mentions having seen at Jerusalem, and whom he calls the brother of the Lord.[2] Now, this James is the same apostle who is called the Less in the Gospel of Saint Mark,[3] he who assisted at the first council[4] in 51, and who died Bishop of Jerusalem in 60 or 61. Consequently, Jude and James the Less, full brothers of Joseph and Simon, are like them, sons of Mary Cleophas, and therefore cannot be the sons of the Most Holy Virgin and the full brothers of Jesus. As regards Simon, the fourth of the personages mentioned by Saint Matthew we know from Hegisippus,[5] a historian of the second century, that he also was the son of Cleophas, and hence, only a cousin of the Saviour.

"The demonstration," says Le Camus, "is conclusive. We must not then be astonished if, at the last hour, Jesus confides His mother to a disciple and a friend. Mary had in reality no other Son than He who died on the cross. She would not have accepted the hospitality of an adopted son if she had had other real ones. And we must not say that Mary went to the house of John because the brothers of Jesus were incredulous; the

[1] Epist. Cathol., 1, 1: "Judas, Jesu Christi servus, frater autem Jacobi."

[2] Galat., 1, 19: "Apostolorum vidi neminem nisi Jacobum fratrem Domini."

[3] Mark, XV, 40: "Jacobi Minoris."

[4] Acts, XV, 13 and following.

[5] Quoted by Eusebius, Hist. Eccl., III, 11; — IV, 22.

same brothers dwelt beside her at the Cenacle, and there shared her faith and her hopes.'' [1]

Influenced by the Apocryphal Gospels,[2] several ancient authors, and even Fathers of the Church considered the sons of Mary Cleophas as children born to Saint Joseph before his marriage with the Virgin. Some others suppose that the holy patriarch married the widow of his brother Cleophas, in conformity with the law of the levirat. Their explanations, which rest on valueless documents or are gratuitous suppositions, are related here only as memoranda. Unprejudiced science is constrained to admit, first of all, that the opinion which attributes to Mary other children beside Jesus, goes directly against the unwavering and universal belief of the Church.[3] This is true not only of the Latin Church, (where the opinion of Saint Hilary and Saint Ambrose regarding the pretended children of Saint Joseph has never been accepted) but still more perhaps of the Greek Church (where the sentiments of Origen and Eusebius on the same subject have never prevailed). From the apostolic times Papias had laid the foundations of Catholic tradition,[4] of which Saint Jerome and Saint Augustine became the later

[1] Le Camus, Vie de N-S., t. 1. p. 168.

[2] *Hist. de Joseph le charpentier*, 11: — *Évangile de Thomas*. XVI.

[3] Le Camus: *L'Œuvre des Apôtres*, c. VIII, the second note on page 296. — Cf. Fouard, Vie de N-S., t. 1, appendix V. — Dumax, Généalogie de N-S., p. 297 et seqq.

[4] See Migne, *Patrol. Græca*, t. V, p. 1261.

apologists, with a success calculated to convince all sincere minds, to whatsoever profession they belonged.[1]

The mother of James, Joseph, Jude, and Simon, was called Mary like her august relative; this point does not admit of discussion. It is not quite the same regarding the name of her husband — Cleophas, according to Saint John,[2] and Alpheus according to the three other Evangelists.[3] But this difficulty is only apparent since "Cleophas" and "Alpheus" are two Greek forms of the same Aramaic name, "Klophah", pronounced either with or without the aspirate. It is a question, then, of one and the same man, of whom tradition tells us that he was the younger brother of Saint Joseph,[4] and that he became one of the seventy-two disciples of the Saviour. Some have even supposed him to be one of the guests of Emmaus, the only one whose name Saint Luke has given us.[5]

Mary, his spouse, sister of the Holy Virgin according to Saint John, could not, however, be the daughter of Anne and Joachim; tradition is unanimous on this point. We must then understand

[1] See Smith, *Dic. of the Bible, James;* — Mill, *On Mythical interpretation of the Gospels*, p. 219 and following.

[2] John XIX; 25.

[3] Matth., X, 3; — Mark, III, 18; — Luke, VI, 15.

[4] Hegisippus ap. Eusebium *Hist. eccl.* lib., III c. 2.

[5] Luke XXIV, 18, — The two called Cleophas are, however, different: the disciple of Emmaus was martyred, while the brother of St. Joseph died an ordinary death. — Cf. Bolland. 26. May and the 25. September.

the word "sister" as we have already understood the word "brother" in its wider sense, — that of "sister-in-law" for instance, in conformity with the opinion according to which, Cleophas would be the brother of Saint Joseph. Saint Epiphanes, Saint John Chrysostom, Saint Jerome, Eusebius, Theodoret, Nicephorus, follow in this the testimony of Hegisippus, which takes us back to the time of the apostles.

To Cleophas and Mary were born, — besides the four sons named by Saint Matthew, — probably two daughters, whose names are rather difficult to determine.[1] They are usually called Mary and Salome, the latter being identified with the mother of the sons of Zebedee, John the Evangelist, and James the Greater.[2] It is of them that the Jews of Capharnaum speak in the Gospel of Saint Mark, when alluding to the family of Jesus: "Are not also His sisters here with us?"[3] They are then related to Our Lord in the second degree, and were legally His first cousins.

We have thus reconstructed the whole surroundings of Jesus Christ at Nazareth. Cleophas and the first Mary lived near Joseph and the Most

[1] Nicephorus (following S. Hippolytus) calls them Esther and Thamar. — S. Epiphanus (Haeres. 78) and Theophilactus (In Matth., XXVII) prefer the names of Mary and Salome. This is also the opinion of Castro (*de Deipara*, c, 1.) — The apocryphal *History* of *Joseph* (c. II) calls them Assia and Lydia.

[2] Matth., XX, 20; — XXVII, 56; — Mark, XV, 40; XVI, 1.

[3] Mark, VI, 3: "Nonne et *sorores* ejus hic nobiscum sunt?"

Holy Virgin, with their six children, four sons and two daughters. Three of their sons do not appear to have married, James, Jude, and Simon. Regarding this latter however, it is an open question, since grave authors seem to think he was the bridegroom of Cana. In any case, there still remained in the time of Domitian distant cousins of Jesus, whose obscure poverty protected them from the jealousy of the tyrant,[1] and who must have been descended from one of the sons of Cleophas, perhaps from Joseph the Just, perhaps also from Salome. At all events, it is correct to say with Dumax[2] that Saint Simon was the last representative of the kinsfolk of the Saviour, and that with him the historical notoriety of the family of David disappeared.

Of the two daughters of Cleophas, the elder, Salome, had married a fisherman of Bethsaida named Zebedee, whom tradition, supplementing the silence of the Gospel, places among the number of the seventy-two first followers of the Messiah. She had had two sons, James surnamed the Greater, and John who was to become the beloved disciple. According to reliable computations these two young men should have been, at the beginning of the evangelical preaching, nearly of the same age as Jesus Christ ; for James was born about the first year of the Christian era, and his brother two years later.[3] They thus naturally enjoyed a greater

[1] Eusebius, Hist. eccl., III, 15, 32; IV, 22.

[2] Généalogie de N.-S., p. 305, cit. Cornel. a Lapide, Calmet and Glaire.

[3] Dumax; op. cit., p. 312.

familiarity with the divine Child, and were subsequently honoured by His friendship during His public life. The same cause explains their prompt adherence to the new prophet, and their vocation to the apostolate long before the call of the two sons of Cleophas.

The sister of Salome is scarcely mentioned in the Gospel. Saint Matthew speaks of her twice, — at Calvary, near the tomb, — at the door of which she was seated with Magdalen on Good Friday evening, and was there again from dawn on the day of Resurrection.[1] It is certainly enough to glorify her, but not enough to satisfy us. Happily, the mystery which surrounds her has not overshadowed her companions, and we can, in speaking of them, place her in a setting worthy of her fidelity to the Master and of the affection with which He repaid her devotion.

The relations betwen Jesus and His family during the hidden life at Nazareth, can be surmised from the frequent allusions in the Gospel to their subsequent connection. A considerable difference in age separated the sons of Mary from the children of Cleophas. Salome, who seems to have been the eldest, was eighteen or nineteen years older than Jesus, and her youngest brother, Joseph, was born ten years later than she, so that he was a grown man when his cousin had scarcely passed the state of infancy.[2] To judge him by his sons,

[1] Matth., XXVII, 61: "Erant autem ibi Maria Magdalene et *altera Maria*, sedentes contra sepulchrum;" — XXVIII, 1: "Venit Maria Magdalene et *altera Maria* videre sepulchrum."

[2] Dumax, *op. cit.*, p. 308–312.

Cleophas was one of those hard-headed, inflexible Jews, towards whom one could scarcely feel drawn : between Joseph and him fraternity was not productive of any great intimacy, and the love of the Virgin for silence and retirement accentuating this fact, the two families remained, no doubt, somewhat apart, meeting only when compelled by the necessities of life and conventionalities of relationship.

Omnipotent wisdom willed that it should be so, in order that the Saviour might not seem to have drawn the inspiration of His new doctrine from the prejudices or interests of His family. We have already seen how little He valued flesh and blood when there was question of His heavenly Father's service; we shall see it more clearly still when we study the formation of the Apostolic College. But henceforth we may remark it : the grouping of the apostles is characteristic in this respect. Three divisions, clearly defined,[1] may be noticed in this assembly — men alike in appearance, in character, in will and mission — each division consisting of four persons drawn together by design, and in an order which clearly manifests a preference.

To the first section belong Peter, Andrew, James the Greater, and John, — the first called, — all four from Bethsaida, of whom two only, the last named, are relations of Jesus. These are the privileged few, of that there can be no doubt, but by reason of their faith and not of

[1] Matth., X 2-4; — Mark III, 16-19; — Luke, VI, 14-16; — Act. Apost, I, 13.

their relationship to Him, which He did not consider in James and his brother.

The second group comprises Philip, Matthew, Batholomew, and Thomas,[1] united only by the tie of their common faith, and as much strangers to the Master as they were to each other. To the third group finally, — the least noble, we might almost say, — belong James the Less, Jude, and Simon, three first cousins of the Saviour, who had for their colleague the man of Kerioth, the traitor Judas.[2] One hesitates to think so, but it seems as if Christ would teach us to mistrust all family influence, and treated it as bordering on inconsistency or even treason, to accentuate the lesson. The priest according to the order of Melchisedech[3] has no family; the apostle even less, in the sense that he must give his relatives no consideration when he hears the call of souls. Woe to the priest or apostle who delays the Holy Spirit, were it even to render the last honours to his father.[4] Has he not the stern command? "Follow me, and let the dead bury the dead."[5]

Before they were called to the honour of the apostolate, the sons of Cleophas had shown

[1] The order varies in this series, according to the Evangelists, but the elements of the grouping are the same, and Saint Philip always holds the first place.

[2] Matth., X, 4; — Mark, III, 19; — Luke, VI, 16.

[3] Psalm CIX, 4. — "Sacerdos . . . . . secundum ordinem Melchisedech."

[4] Matth., VIII, 21; — Luke, IX, 59.

[5] Matth., *ibid*, 22: "Sequere me et dimitte mortuos sepelire mortuos."

hostility to the mission of Jesus: "They did not believe in Him,"[1] says the Gospel, and they reproached Him for not manifesting Himself to the Jews and to the world.[2] But Jesus was purposely reserved, as the reply which He made to them at the time of the Feast of Tabernacles witnesses when they departed for Jerusalem.[3] The attachment of these Jews of the old stamp to the rabbinical traditions explains their coldness, and also their desire to have a guarantee of the mission of Jesus. Simon alone is designated in the Gospel of Saint Luke by the epithet of "zealot;"[4] but James, Jude, and Joseph, if they did not openly belong to the same society, did not share the less in the opinion of their brother, with an inveterate dislike to all changes, especially to those of a radical character. They were of the race of Nathaniel, that good Israelite in whom there was no guile.[5] In spite of their waywardness, faith brought about the enlightenment and transformation of their souls: such stubborn people had all that was required to give to Truth apostles and martyrs.

The remark of Saint John relative to their incredulity, carries us back to a precise date, that

[1] John, VII, 5: "Neque enim fratres ejus credebant in eum."

[2] Id., VII, 3-4: "Transi hinc et vade in Judeam . . . . . manifesta te ipsum mundo."

[3] John VII, 8: "Go you up to this festival day: but I go not up to this festival day; because my time is not yet fulfilled."

[4] Luke, VI, 15: "Simon qui vocatur Zelotes,"

[5] John 1, 47: "Bonus israelita in quo dolus non est."

of the Feast of Tabernacles, on the 9th of October, in the 33rd year of Christ.[1] The Master had then not more than seven months to live, and nevertheless, He still met with resistance in the souls of His nearest relatives, who had been His apostles for more than a year. Doubtless, we should not take the expressions of the Evangelist in their strict sense, which would imply a kind of contradiction; but they show little enthusiasm and devotedness in the docility of the sons of Alpheus. The victory of divine Love over them could only be the more striking, and we cannot read without emotion the reply of Simon to the observation of Jesus when leaving the guest-chamber, to go to meet Judas. — "Lord, here are two swords!"[2] The Zealot is wholly subdued at this moment, and his natural impetuosity prompts him to defend, with the sword, Him whom he had so long doubted; but he is not alone in this disposition, which is shared by James, the austere observer of tradition, and Jude, a man of quick intelligence and generous heart.[3] Indeed Jude seems to have cherished, even to the end, the idea of a terrestial kingdom of the Messiah, as his words at the close of the Last Supper testify;[4] but his persistence in

[1] Chevallier, Récits évangéliques, p. 299.

[2] Luke, XXII, 38: "Domine, ecce duo gladii hic."

[3] Saint James remained faithful to mosaic traditions till his death, and Saint Jude is surnamed Thaddeus, for his qualities of mind and heart.

[4] John, XIV, 22: "Lord, how is it that Thou wilt manifest Thyself to us, and not to the world?"

an illusion which he and his colleagues had so long treasured, lessens in no way his fidelity and devotion.

Joseph is not united with his brothers in the honour of the apostolate, but tradition has never hesitated in placing him among the number of the disciples. Many have even supposed him to be the Justus Barsabas who, according to the Acts,[1] was the candidate for election with Matthias, in the Cenacle. This conjecture is not perhaps convincing, but it is none the less honourable to the last son of Cleophas, whose age some have thought was the sole hindrance to his being chosen at first.

In any case, the brothers of Jesus ended by placing themselves among His followers, and the Apostolic character had honoured their adhesion even before it became irreproachable. The affection of the Master for those of His family did not blind Him, but disposed Him to an indulgence which is above reproach, more especially when mindful of His prophetic knowledge of hearts and His foreknowledge of the future. If He had seen Nathaniel under the shadow of the fig tree, where he hid from prying eyes,[2] much more had He long before penetrated the secrets of these souls vowed to His love and service by the common ties of blood, faith, and virtue.

At the time of their vocation, Jesus paired

[1] Act. Apost. I, 23: — Saint Jude is also called *Barsabas* in the Acts (XV, 22) which suggests the thought that this name was common to the sons of Alpheus.

[2] John, I, 48: "Cum esses sub ficu, vidi te."

them, if we may so speak, as He had the other apostles whom He sent before Him, two and two,[1] and — even as He had united the brothers Andrew and Peter, James the Greater and John — He appointed James the Less the companion of Jude. Simon could not be paired with Joseph, because the latter did not belong to the twelve, and his companion was the man of Kerioth, usually called Judas, to distinguish him from the cousin of the Lord. Those who take delight in subtle research find perhaps, a singular propriety in this partnership of the traitor and the zealot. Did not the Master wish thus to give a somewhat suspicious attendant to this servant who was already suspected by several in the apostolic college? And who could be better suited for this office? The character of Simon was calculated to inspire Judas with a certain confidence, since both hoped for the terrestial kingdom of the Messiah, — and at the same time would keep him in check by the almost violent ardour which so easily led him astray. More than once, without doubt, the loyalty of the Galilean made the crafty Jew reflect, and if the traitor had been, at Gethsemani, as near to the zealot as Malchus was to the other Simon, the second sword brought from the Guest-chamber would probably have chastised him with a surer and more vigorous aim.

Jude and Simon do not appear to have been the objects of any special affection, either before or

[1] Mark, VI, 7; — Luke, X, 1.

after the Resurrection. It was not thus with James the Less, to whom was vouchsafed one of the first apparitions of the Vanquisher of Death.[1] Tradition insinuates that he was constituted Bishop of Jerusalem by the Lord Himself.[2] In any case, we find him already holding the first place after Peter, in the meeting which regulated the position in the Church, of the neophytes converted from Paganism.[3] From this time he takes a leading part in early Christian history, at least on subjects relating to Judea and the Holy City. Held in an esteem seldom accorded by the Jews themselves, according to ancient writers,[4] he was almost as much venerated by the Christians on account of his knowledge, his wisdom, his moderation, and his austerity. His name became an epithet of distinction for his brothers and his mother. In Saint Luke, Jude is simply the brother of James;[5] in Saint Matthew and Saint Mark, the spouse of Cleophas is called Mary, the Mother of James the Less;[6] in Saint Paul he is, *par excellence*, the brother of the Lord.[7]

[1] 1 Cor., X 5, 7: "Deinde visus est Jacobo."

[2] Petrus de Natalibus, *Catalog. Sanctorum*.

[3] Act. Apost., XV, 13–21.

[4] Josephus, Hegisippus, Abdias etc.—Cf. Petrus de Natalibus (*Catalogus Sanctorum*) et Baronius, *Annales* — Doubtless, he owed this veneration, to his zeal for all mosaic observances of which he was ever the faithful observer and jealous defender. (Cf. Fouard, *Saint Paul*, c. III).

[5] Luke, VI, 16: "Judam Jacobi."

[6] Matth., XXVII, 56: "Maria Jacobi et Joseph mater." — Mark, XV, 40: "Maria Jacobi Minoris et Joseph mater."

[7] 1 Cor. XV, 7; — Galat., 1, 19.

Saint Jude himself, immediately after his title of "servant of Jesus Christ," takes that of *brother of James*.[1] We have a letter of his to the converted Jews, the first of seven Catholic Epistles. It was written in Greek, about the year 60, with the object of warning the faithful against the doctrine of the Simonites, Nicolaites, and the first Agnostics. "Without proceeding as Saint Paul did, by reasoning and with method, Saint James enunciated his ideas as they came to his mind, either by maxim or assertion, without seeking to connect them with or deduce them from the same principle, expressing them in a simple style at once forcible and elevated, embellishing them with happy antitheses, graceful images, and rounded periods. He exhorts first to patience, reveals the author of all wisdom, points out the vanity of this world's goods and the chastisements which await the rich. He wishes to deter the faithful from the vain love of profane knowledge, from the ambition of power, and exhorts them to the practice of the imperative duties of charity and justice. To disabuse those who applied to the new law the barrenness of the works of the old, he showed by a comparison of the soul animating the body, that faith without works is dead. Finally he gives rules full of great wisdom for all states of life."[2]

[1] Epist. Cath. B. Judae, 1 "Judas, Jesu Christi servus, frater autem Jacobi."

[2] Arnaud, *Préface de l'épitre de S. Jacques*. —Cf. Calmet, Dictionnaire de *la Bible*.

The persecution of the year 42, in bringing about the dispersion of the apostles, left him alone in Jerusalem, under the eyes of Herod-Agrippa and the High Priest, Matthias-ben-Hannah, [1] brother-in-law of Caiphas. To the blood of James the Greater, the favourite of Caligula and Claudius would have willingly added that of the brother of the Lord, fully sure that by so doing he would please the Jews [2] and their pontiffs. But Providence watched over the Bishop, and the crown of martyrdom was not granted to him till twenty years later, in the reign of the second Agrippa, when the prefect Albinus was on his way from Alexandria to Cæsarea, whither he was coming to take the place of Porcius Festus. Profiting by the absence of the king and the governor, the High-Priest Ananias stirred up a popular sedition against the Christians, seized the old apostle,[3] dragged him to the Temple, and forced him to address the multitude from the top of a portico from which he had him thrown down when he was heard proclaiming the divinity of Jesus. Shattered by the fall, but still living, James tried to get upon his knees to pray, like Saint Stephen, for his executioners, when a fuller ended his life by a blow on the head.

[1] Third son of Anne, and brother of Jonathan, of Theophilus, and of Ananus, who were also high priests.

[2] Act. Apost., XII, 3: "Videns autem quia *placeret Judaeis*."

[3] He was then eighty-six years of age. (*The Roman Martyrology* says ninety-six; but this is probably an error. — Cf. Dumax, *op. cit.*, p. 310.)

The horror of this crime dismayed all those who still retained a vestige of humanity and patriotism, and Josephus interprets the general feeling, when he attributes the misfortunes of Jerusalem to the death of the martyr. Albinus was intensely irritated at the audacity of Ananias, and the king, no less disgusted at this crime, took away, three months later, the High Priesthood from the assassin, and gave it to Jesus-bar-Damneus.[1] Simon replaced his brother on the episcopal throne, whence he was driven for ever by the siege to which the city and sanctuary finally succumbed.[2]

He then fled to Egypt,[3] where he took refuge, and preached the Gospel in the north of Africa. If we can credit Dorotheus and Nicephorus,[4] he crossed the sea, traversed Gaul, and brought the good tidings even to Great Britain, but these testimonies cannot be accepted without reserve. According to Abdias,[5] whom Pope Gelasius places

[1] Josephus. Antiq. Jud., XX, VIII. — Cf. Origen., *Contra Cels.*, lib. 1.

[2] This opinion is not in conformity with the *Roman Martyrology* which makes Saint Simon return to Jerusalem, to suffer martyrdom, in the reign of Trajan (107 or 109) at the age of a hundred and twenty years. He would seem to have been crucified by order of the judge Atticus. (*Nicephorus, op. cit.*) — Perhaps the difference of opinion arises from a confusion betwen Simon the Zealot and Simeon, another relative of our Lord. (Cf. Dumax, *op. cit.*)

[3] *Martyrol. rom.* ad 28. Octob.

[4] Dorotheus, *Synopsis* etc. — Nicephorus, *Hist. eccles.*

[5] Abdias, Bishop of Babylon, wrote a *History of the Apostles.*

among the Apocryphal writers, but in whose writings Baronius found some interesting documents, Simon the Zealot succeeded in rejoining his brother Jude in Persia, who had come thither through Mesopotamia from Idumea and Arabia.[1] They united their efforts against the sun-worshippers, whose fury soon burst upon them. The two apostles were put to death at Suanyr, the 28th October of the year 107, in the reign of Trajan.[2]

Of the four sons of Cleophas, two bear historically the surname of Just, — James,[3] and Joseph,[4] but with a very different renown. The first is illustrious among the apostles, the second remains almost unknown among the disciples. All that we know of him is that he preached in Judea with success, and died there, after having suffered much at the hands of the Jews. Some ancient writers make him Bishop of Eleutheropolis, the old Bethogabra,[5] on the frontiers of the country of the Philistines, fifty five miles to the south-west of Jerusalem. He had taken poison, administered by the hands of his perfidious enemies, but without feeling its

[1] According to the Greeks and Armenians.

[2] Eusebius (*Hist. eccles.*) gives the age of Simon as one hundred and twenty. — According to the calculation of Dumax (*op. cit.*, p. 312), Jude would have been a hundred and twenty one.

[3] Eusebius, Hist., II, 2.

[4] Act. Apost., I, 23: "Joseph who was called Barsabas, surnamed the just!"

[5] Others say Geth: at the present day Beit-Jibrin, a village of fifty houses.

effects, fulfilling the promise of the Master.[1] He was thus a martyr — though not to death — like John the Evangelist, whose sweet disposition and discreet apostolate he seems to have enjoyed.

Cleophas had preceded his sons in death. He died at Capharnaum, about the year 40, in the same obscurity which had overshadowed all his life.[2] It only remains then for us to speak of Mary, the spouse to whom his name owes the little historic glory with which it is clothed. If we do not find her in company with the holy women who followed Our Lord Jesus Christ, this should be the place to speak of her: the mother ought to be found near her sons, were it but to give to our sketch the finishing touch, which will perfect the resemblance. We have judged them in the beginning in relation to their father, a Jew of the old stamp, somewhat severe and ill-disposed to what he called the innovations of the Gospel. But they are not altogether like Alpheus; the image of Mary is equally and even more plainly visible in them, at least in the second stage of their existence, and in the latter part of their lives. As usual, it is the maternal

[1] Mark, XVI, 18: "If they shall drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them."

[2] The Bollandists give the date 26. May, and make him father of the apostles James and *Matthew*. There is evidently some confusion here. Matthew was the son of Alpheus (Mark II, 14), but not of him whom tradition makes the brother of Saint Joseph. Tradition supports the opinion of the Bollandists regarding Saint James, but it is now abandoned by Hagiographers.

influence that strikes the balance; it is the mother who determines their vocation and their place in history. We surmise without much effort that she had gained her children over to the conviction with which she herself was penetrated; she had been their initiator into the new life to which she had long desired to bring them. Her tender affection for the Virgin-Mother had naturally drawn her to the divine Child, and when the hour came for the preaching of the Messiah, it found her fully prepared for the faith and apostolate. The Gospel also takes care to distinguish between her and her sons, whose incredulity could not be a reproach to her, — quite the contrary, since it was by her influence that they were soon to be in the ranks of the first disciples and martyrs.

When they became members of the Apostolic College, her tresses were already white, although she was still far from the term of her earthly pilgrimage. We are uncertain of her age, but she was much older than the Blessed Virgin, since her eldest daughter, Salome, was born seven years before Mary, and Joseph, her youngest son ten years before Jesus Christ.[1] She was, therefore, at that time, a companion and assistant, better still, a discreet confidante specially destined for the Mother of the Saviour after the death of Saint Joseph; then during the three years of His public Life, and finally, after the Ascension,

[1] Dumax, *Généalogie de N.-S. J-C.*, p. 312. — Cf. *M. Maximi Chronicon* (*Addition. Braulionis et Hellecae: ad.* ann. 16 et 17.)

until the time when the hatred of the Jews drove her to adopt Gaul as her second country. But it was especially, on Calvary that she had her rightful place beside her august relative, if not as her consoler, since the new Rachel would not be consoled, at least as the friend most capable of sympathising in her unutterable sorrow. We find her, in fact, beside the cross,[1] in the first rank of those pious women whose devotion could not be shaken, while the courage of the apostles wavered. She sustained Mary in her arms when overcome by exhaustion, aided her gently to render the last duties to the Crucified, and spent with her, in prayer and tears, the time which intervened until the Resurrection.

Tradition presents her to us again at Jaffa, in the disabled vessel to which the Jews had committed Martha, Magdalen, Salome, Sara and Marcella, with Lazarus and several other disciples of Jesus. In confiding to the sea the task of suppressing their antagonists, the friends of the Synagogue thought perhaps that their hands would remain stainless before the Lord, since they had not shed blood.[2] The casuistry of the Rabbins recognised such absolution, and moreover, was it not zeal for the law that had inspired their vengeance?[3] But He whom the winds and the

[1] John, XIX, 25: "Stabat autem *juxta crucem Jesu* mater ejus, Maria Cleophae et Maria Magdalene."

[2] Deuter., XXI, 7–9: "Manus nostrae non effuderunt sanguinem, nec oculi viderunt . . . . Et auferetur ab eis reatus sanguinis."

[3] I Macch., II, 27: "Omnis qui zelum habet legis, etc." Act. XIII. 45: "Judaei repleti sunt zelo, etc."

sea obey,[1] quietly carried the barque over the reefs[2] on which it would have foundered, and landed these living relics of His heart on the shores of Provence.[3]

The reader will perhaps be surprised at not finding any hesitation in our story at the point to which we have conducted him. The coming to Provence of the friends of Jesus Christ was, in the seventh century, the object of heated discussions, the echo of which is prolonged even to our own times. We should not be justified in associating the first adversaries of tradition — avowed Jansenists — with the more recent disputants, excellent Catholics, and distinguished by a learning far superior to that of John de Launoy and Adrian Baillet. But if there is a great difference between the men, there is not much between their theories, at least substantially. It is always the same difficulty arising from the absence of positive documents before a certain period, or the doubtful authenticity of the documents produced, for since Launoy's time proofs have come to light, the absence of which, he said, gave strength to his arguments, and the testimony of which, modern writers say, shows the weakness of the thesis they would corroborate.

[1] Mark, IV, 40: "Ventus et mare obediunt ei."

[2] The port of Jaffa is closed by a belt of reefs, always difficult to cross, particularly in a rough sea, whether coming from the open sea or leaving land. The ancients had already described this coast: "Malefida carinis."

[3] Lacordaire, *Sainte Madeleine*, Introduction.

Criticism has removed the mask of erudition from Launoy (who succeeded for a time in shaking the strongest minds, such as the authors of the Gallia Christiana,[1] and those of the Acta Sanctorum).[2] It clearly points out the more or less voluntary errors, the confusion, and the contradictions which emanate from the writings of the Norman Doctor. In 1848, the Abbé Faillon, in his Monuments Inédites, furnishes the elements of a correction of which it is impossible to deny the effect on the public mind, and which seems decisive to the most competent men.[3] After him others devoted themselves to the study of Provençal traditions, so brilliantly used by Lacordaire in his masterpiece of piety and eloquence known by the name of "Sainte Marie-Madeleine." At the same time there was a general movement of return to the doctrine of the Apostolic origin of Christianity in Gaul, and one of the first results of this was the confirmation of the tradition relating to the friends of Jesus Christ.

It must be admitted that both sides can be maintained, and those opposed to the evangelisation of Provence by Lazarus and Magdalen are also opposed to the Apostolic origin of our Churches. The question was already proposed in this way in

[1] V., In their first tome, the curious contradictions into which they were drawn, on this question, by the evident influence of Launoy.

[2] V., in the Bollandists, the month of August, on 22nd and on 26th.

[3] *Monum. inédits sur l'apostolat de sainte Madeleine en Provence*, etc.; Paris, Migne.

the seventeenth century, and Natalis Alexander[1] was right in closely connecting together in his reply to Launoy, his two dissertations on the foundations of the first episcopal sees of the Gauls,[2] and on the coming of Saints Martha and Magdalen to Aix and Marseilles.[3] In our own time the same effort is still made, and — what seems strange — after so much experience, so many results achieved, it is maintained on the same conditions — that is to say, with the same arguments, the value of which, notwithstanding, has not been augmented by time. There is always a desire to prove that our Church does not go back to apostolic times, in spite of the tradition confirmed by the Fathers[4] and which Bossuet sanctioned by his powerful eloquence when he said: "After Rome, and through her, all the Occident has come over to Jesus Christ, and we have come to Him among the first; the Lord prompted Saint Peter and his successors to send us, from the earliest times, the Bishops who have founded our Churches."[5] Would one not say that the great orator had in view the letter of the Frankish Bishops written to Saint Radegonde: "It is with the pioneers of the Catholic Religion

[1] Natal. Alexander, *Hist. ecclesiast.*, t. III.

[2] Dissertat. XVI. *De praedicationis evangelicae in Galliis exordio.*

[3] Dissertat. XVII. *De B. Mariae Magdalenae, Lazari et Marthae in Galliis appulsu.*

[4] Saint Cyprian, Saint Epiphanus, Saint Irenaeus, Tertullian, Theodoret, Eusebius, Saint Isidore, etc.

[5] Bossuet, *L'unité de l'Église.* — Cf. Id., *Hist. univers.* cit. Tertullian, *Advers. Judaeos*, c. 10.

that the first manifestations of the faith in Gaul are connected."[1] Those who hold the opposite opinion have not coincided in this, and trace back to the third century only, the names of those frequently found in the records of the first. The consequence evidently appears to be that he who was raised from the dead at Bethany is no longer the first Bishop of Marseilles, that the holy Marys are not the Apostles of Camargue, or that Saint Magdalen is not the penitent of Saint Baume.

Indeed the simplest of readers is a little disconcerted by the inexplicable oblivion to which they see consigned, in the preoccupations of the Apostles, the fairest parts of the Roman Empire, above all this Provence to which Marseilles attracted the wits of Rome and Athens. They would rather believe with Saints Isidore and Iraeneus, in the immediate evangelisation of Gaul,[2] because common sense here agrees with tradition and existing monuments.

We cannot involve the reader in the examination of objections, more or less questionable, which encumber the way we traverse. We shall have occasion, in speaking of the hosts of Jesus at Bethany, to study some of them, but it would need more than one volume, and that of the largest, to refute the attacks, in which some happy remarks

[1] "Cum ipso catholicae religionis exortu caepissent, gallicanis in finibus, venerandae fidei primordia respirare." (Greg. Tur., I. IX).

[2] S. Isidor., *De ortu et obitu patrum.* — S. Iren., *Adv. Haeres.*, I. 10.

are lost in an ocean of quibbles, which for the most part have not even the merit of being original.

Are they even more ingenious when they deny that Provençal writers are wanting in critical acumen, and consequently in the judgment necessary to the right appreciation of documents? Was the Abbé Faillon, though Provençal, denied the possesion of it, — as some have alleged, and has he thereby been wanting in it as much as has been pretended? We are permitted to doubt it, especially after having studied the arguments opposed to the thesis of the regretted Sulpician. For our part we do doubt it, and whatever leanings the Friar Preachers may be reproached with towards the Saints of Provence, we remain faithful to the tradition of which our Order had constituted itself the defender, in the seventeenth century, after having been its custodian for four hundred years. We shall never believe that all our Fathers, without exception, were the dupes or accomplices of the improbable error to which we owe what is called the legend of Saint Magdalen. History assigns them another character, and gives us another conviction. We claim for ourselves the liberty which others take, — respecting upright intentions, acknowledged learning, and services rendered, — but demanding the same justice, if not for ourselves and our personal work, at least for the men and the works whose traces we have followed, and whose heritage we have received.

Let us return now to our story and rejoin the

friends of the Saviour on the sandy beach where we have seen them disembark.

The little band separated without delay. Lazarus, with his sisters and Marcella, took the road to Marseilles, leaving Trophimius at Arles and delegating Maximin to Aix. Mary remained in the Camargue with Salome her daughter, and Sara their servant, living in contemplation, that is to say in meditating on the great memories brought from the Holy Land, and on the prophecies accomplished on Jerusalem and the Temple. For the news was, doubtless, brought to them of the latest violence of the Jews against the faithful, and of the vengeance which God had taken by the hands of Vespasian and Titus.[1] The fishermen who stayed sometimes on this shore, received from them the knowledge of the Gospel, and diffused it along the coasts, in the direction of Marseilles to the East, and of Agde towards the West. Several years passed, after which Mary of Cleophas gave her soul to God, not without having received the Viaticum from the hands of Trophimius, surrounded by Christians assembled from all sides to assist at her last moments. The body was buried with great respect near the oratory where she was accustomed to gather her neophytes together, and to the fountain which a miracle, it is said, had caused to gush forth from the sand, at the time of her arrival in Provence.[2]

[1] We know, in fact, that the holy friends of Jesus lived more than thirty years after their arrival in Gaul, which brings us to a date subsequent to the siege of Jerusalem.

[2] The spring still exists, in the nave of the basilica.

Some months later, Salome rejoined her mother in the tomb, surrounded by the same sad feeling of the faithful of the country. Scarcely asleep in death, the two holy friends of the Saviour became the patrons of nascent Christianity, and from generation to generation, even to our days, this cult is maintained in its primitive fervour. Pilgrims visit each day the basilica raised over their Sepulchre by the second king of Arles — William, son of Boson, and grand-nephew of Charlemagne.[1] Twice a year, on the 25th May and the 22nd October,[2] but more especially on the first date, crowds invade the church of the holy Marys of the Sea, with demonstrations of enthusiasm which defy all description. When the reliquary is brought down from the chapel where it is usually kept, the enthusiasm amounts almost to delirium, and whilst the crowd gathered on the sea shore receives the blessing which the officiating priest gives them with a fragment of the relics, a vigorous clamour is raised, which forcibly recalls the hosannas of the entry into Jerusalem.[3] Then, when the celebration is over, and the relics restored to their former place, tears and sobs mingle with thanksgiving and blessing. What are the equivocal manifestations which surround those whom the world calls glorious and powerful,

[1] Towards the end of the tenth century (981).

[2] On the 25th May, the feast of Saint Mary the mother of James is kept, and on the 22nd October that of Mary Salome.

[3] Lamoureux, Manuel pour le pèlerinage des Saintes Maries, p. 51. — Cf. Mistral, Mireio, c. X—XII.

in comparison with these truly popular triumphs? Salome asked for her two sons a place at the right and the left of the Saviour: could she then foresee that on both sides of the Master, piety would one day salute, not only the sons, but even their mother and their grandmother?[1] Happy women, the solemnity of whose feast gives joy not only to men but to the angels, and even to the Son of God, on the throne to which ascend the hymns that celebrate their memory![2] Let us unite in this concert, and repeat with the pilgrims of Provence the salutation of the Holy Marys.

"Hail, illustrious mother of James the Less! Hail, venerated mother of James the Greater! Hail to both, whom the ties of blood united so closely to our Redeemer! Bring us in your footsteps towards the Kingdom of eternal light![3]

[1] "Sanctae Matres et filii — Faxint ne simus reprobi, — Dies magna cum venerit, — Judexque summus aderit," says an ancient hymn in their office.

[2] "De quarum solemnitate gaudent Angeli et collaudant Filium Dei." (Introit of the Mass of the Saint Marys).

[3] "Salve, mater inclyta Jacobi Minoris! Ave, parens optima Jacobi Majoris! Utraque matertera nostri Redemptoris, nos ad regna supera trahite splendoris! . . . . (Salutation to the relics when being carried from the upper chapel.)

Chapter IV.

Zachary and Elizabeth.

> "And they were both just before God, walking in all the Commandments and justification of the Lord without blame."

The Gospel scarcely speaks of the kinsfolk of Jesus Christ, but seems rather to consign them to the obscurity from which it had drawn them for a time. Whence it is that some commentators are at pains to remove the obscurity which surrounds them, as in the case of the sister of Mary and the brothers of the Lord. It is quite the contrary when there is question of the friendships of the Master, and this perplexes those who do not see the underlying reason, and who are, perhaps, shocked at the anomaly.

This is not the time for explanation, but we may now recall the fact that the Good Tidings did not at first find willing listeners among those most closely related to Jesus, in whose estimation fidelity to their divine vocation was of greater worth than all the ties of family: "Whosoever shall do the will of my Father, who is in heaven, he is my brother, and sister, and mother!"[1] His friendships were formed principally in correspondence with the designs which He Himself served;

[1] Matth., XII. 48—50: "Qui sunt Fratres mei, etc."

in this sense a friend was more precious to Him than a brother, in accordance with the rule laid down by the Holy Spirit.[1] If, however, nature and grace united in appealing to His preference, we have no difficulty in believing that it was assured. Had not those whom He specially designed for His immediate circle, a particular right to His first thoughts, and eventually to a participation in His trials and glory? This constant law of His life was applied, long before His birth, to the mother whose flesh and blood He was to assume — and, if we may so speak, whose mind and heart also — at the moment of His coming into the world. He loved already, through Mary, those whom He loved in later years, on account of their innocence or their penitence.

At the first step that He takes in mortal life, still hidden in Mary's bosom, but already sharing in our humanity, He shall meet two souls well calculated to please Him, those named immediately after Joseph in the Gospel, and whose attractions we shall strive not to change.

When David in his old age made the eldest of the sons that he had had by Bethsabee,[2] king, he convoked a solemn assembly of the Princes and Priests in order to recommend his son to them, and to make sure of the execution of the plans which he himself was unable to realize. The first of these, and the one most dear to his heart, that which he confided with most regret to the care of

[1] Prov., XIII. 24: "Magis amicus erit quam frater."
[2] II. Reg. XII. 24; — I. Paralip., III. 5.

Solomon, was the building of the Temple, where the Ark of the Covenant, borne for many years through Palestine and Idumea, should be deposited. What he had already done in collecting workmen and gathering material was beyond all praise. God having taken away from him all hope of using them, he wished at least to render an account of his efforts, to stimulate the zeal of his heir, and to obviate some of the difficulties which he had to fear.[1] One, and not the least of these, was the great number of levites, and among them sons of Aaron, who had multiplied beyond all expectation. Not counting the priests, they formed a veritable tribe, on which it became necessary to impose regulations hitherto unthought of to insure order and peace.

Aaron had four sons, of whom the two oldest, Nadab and Abiu, died unfortunately in the desert, without leaving any posterity.[2] The two last, Eleazar and Ithamar, had, on the contrary, engendered two races,[3] whose chiefs were, at the end of David's reign, Sadoc, who had aided in the elevation of Solomon, and Abiathar, recently compromised in the adventure of Adonias.[4] These two great races rivalled each other in nobility and pretensions, but differed greatly in number. The sons of Eleazar formed sixteen families under the leadership of Sadoc; those of Ithamar counted only

[1] I. Paralip., XXII. 2 and following.
[2] Levitic., X. 1—3.
[3] I. Paralip., XXIV. 1—3.
[4] III. Reg., 1. 9. and following.

eight, under the direction of Abiathar. The wisdom of David so arranged matters as to prevent all complaints.

To the twenty-four thousand levites,—chanters, musicians, guards, door-keepers — destined for the service of the Temple, he proposed the twenty-four sacerdotal families who should, each in its turn, offer the various sacrifices commanded by the Law. So as not to give any excuse for jealousy, which he had cause to fear, the order in which the sixteen families of Eleazar and the eight of Ithamar should offer sacrifice, he determined by lot. The names of the chiefs of each family were thrown into an urn and drawn by chance:[1] the first name drawn was that of Joarib, whose posterity happily survived the trials of captivity;[2] and after having, it is said, engendered the Machabees,[3] was to give birth to the historian of the last days of Jerusalem.[4]

Abias, a descendant of Eleazar, obtained the eighth place. Less fortunate than the preceding, his race did not return from Babylon with Zorobabel, and when it was necessary to reorganise, in the second Temple, the service established by David, they were obliged to give the name which they had formerly borne to one of the newly-formed groups. The four families brought back from exile[5] were each divided into five sections, in

[1] I. Paralip., XXIV. 5—18.
[2] II. Esdras, XI. 5—10.
[3] I. Macch. II. 1.
[4] Josephus (Vita, I) glories in belonging to this family.
[5] Cf. Esdras, *loc. cit.*

order to reconstruct the ancient series, with the same names as they had formerly borne.[1] The memory of Abias was thus revived, but his descendants did not rise with it, and certain commentators have been mistaken in saying of his house what only applies to his course, according to Saint Luke and the Septuagint.[2]

But, in the days of King Herod, this course had among the number of its representatives a priest named Zachary, a man just before the Lord and respected by his brothers in the sacerdotal office, if we may judge by the position he held in the sacred functions. In fact, the greater number of the priests had, by little and little, lowered their dignity, and many of them lived in misery and ignorance, removed from office, and deprived of all prestige. A few only, of more noble birth and more refined education, — carefully examined by the Sanhedrin, "judge of the priesthood," which had found them "without stain," — were admitted to the honour of crossing the threshold of the sanctuary, and of mounting the altar steps. From the Gospel narrative we may conclude that Zachary was one of the latter class; this opinion is confirmed by tradition, which assigns to him a noble origin and an alliance with the family of David, by his spouse Elizabeth.

A daughter of Aaron,[3] and consequently con-

[1] Josephus, *Antiq.*, VII. XV. 7. — Cf. Robinson *The Evangelist and the Mishna.*

[2] Luke 1. 5: "Ἐξ ἐφημερίας Ἀβιά". Cf. LXX. (I. Paralip. XXIII. 6 etc.)

[3] Luke 1. 5. "De filiabus Aaron."

nected with what we may call the great levitical nobility, Elizabeth equally belonged to the royal race of David, by her mother Sobeh,[1] a daughter of Mathan-ben-Eleazar, direct descendant of the prophet-king.[2] She had, then, brought to her husband the double lustre which belonged to her birth, at once royal and pontifical, thus making him conspicuous in an atmosphere where respect for ancient lineage still survived. In truth, the promotion of the Beni-Phabis and the Beni-Kamiths to the holy office of the priesthood was no proof of any great respect for the family of Aaron; there remained, none the less, in the sacerdotal caste traditions to which were strongly bound influences which it was by no means a matter of indifference to have at its service. Zachary could not but benefit by them, and however unambitious we may suppose him, he had reason to thank Providence for having united his destiny to that of Elizabeth.

But that for which he thanked God most was the great virtue of his spouse — the admirable woman whom the Gospel associates with him in praise and blessing.[3] Both walked together in the ways of justice, with all the more merit that they saw around them nothing but arrogance and indolence, cunning and violence, among the very priests themselves and even in the Temple of

[1] Cornel. a Lapide, *in Lucam*, III. 23 (quoting Christ. de Castro, De Deipara, c. I.)

[2] Matth. 1. 15.

[3] Luke, 1. 6: "And they were both just before God."

Jehovah. The fall from their past greatness, the trials which beset Israel, the depressing outlook of the future, had in no way lessened their confidence in God, nor the fidelity which they had vowed to Him. True children of Abraham, they waited patiently, praying that they might see the manifestation of the Messiah-Redeemer, whose coming seemed near at hand. With the aged Simeon and the prophetess Anna, whom they often met in the vestibule of the Temple, they were persuaded in their hearts that they should not die until they had seen the Christ.[1]

A great sadness was, nevertheless, hidden in their souls. They had no child, and their age, which was advanced, seemed to preclude all hope of one. Not that they were very old, as has been supposed without sufficient reason, since Zachary had not yet reached his fiftieth year, after which limit the priests were not admitted to active service in the sanctuary;[2] but the long sterility of Elizabeth would admit of no illusion, and as it happens to those whose days are passed in sadness, they themselves felt, and appeared to others much older than those of their own age.[3]

Joy rejuvenates; sadness, on the contrary, blights before their time youth, beauty, strength,—like those winds whose breath strips, bends, and mutilates the vigorous branches, till in a few

[1] Luke II. 25—39.

[2] Num., VIII. 25: "Cumque quinquagesimum annum impleverint, servire cessabunt."

[3] Luke I. 7 and 18.

moments they resemble the venerable remains of the forest. The author of all life and of all fruitfulness, He who had given Isaac to Sara in her old age, Samson and Samuel to the mourning spouses of Manue and Elcana, could not reject their prayers for ever. The longer their expectation had been, the greater would be the happiness it should bring them.

They lived in the vicinity of the Holy City, and according to a tradition which seems to support the sacred text,[1] between Jerusalem and Bethsames, at a place called Ain-Karim,[2] the *Fountain of Vines*, on account of the sweet waters that ran along its vine-clad slopes. Twice a year, when the honour of representing the priesthood of Israel came to the course of Abia, Zachary went up to the Temple where he remained during the customary eight days, leaving Elizabeth to her sad thoughts, but with a longing desire to rejoin her in the solitude which they both loved. One day, when he was officiating, his lot having assigned him the most noble of the sacerdotal duties, which consisted in offering incense on the altar erected in

[1] Joshua, XXI. 8—16: "Dederuntque filii Israël Levitis civitates et suburbana eorum . . . . et *Ain* et Ieta et Beth sames."

[2] Karem, according to the supposition of Isambert (Palestine, p. 345 quoting Joshua, XV. 60). Ain-Karim still produces excellent wine. At the present day some Palestinologists resuming the hypothesis of Reland, fix the abode of Zachary at Yutta, which would be the *city of Juda* of Saint Luke, 1, 39. We follow here Guérin and Liévin.

the holy place;[1] holding in his hands the golden panied by the priest who carried the lighted charcoal in a silver dish, and a levite in charge of a mixture cunningly composed of amber, galbanum, storax, and incense,[2] by the family of Attinas.[3] The priest placed the charcoal on the altar; the levite presented his little case to the sacrificer, who spread the perfume on the embers, and remained alone, absorbed in prayer, while the fragrant cloud rose to heaven.[4]

A curtain of hyacinth and purple hid him from the eyes of the people in whose name he prayed. Only a few moments usually elapsed between the offering of the incense and the blessing which the sacrificer gave to the assistants, before they left the vestibule of Israel.[5] But this time their expectation was prolonged; anxiety gained upon them at the thought of some mysterious accident, such as they might always fear in the vicinity of Jehovah, when Zachary appeared, his face pale, his gait unsteady, his lips mute. By signs, and in writing, he explained why he was unable to bless the assemblage: an angel of the Lord had just appeared to him and struck him dumb. But he had no cause to be frightened; quite the contrary, a great joy had been announced to him as an

[1] The duties were drawn by lot. The offering of incense came in the third rank.

[2] Exod. XXX. 34—36.

[3] Edersheim, *The Temple*, 134.

[4] Lightfoot, *Hor. hebraic.*, in Evang. Lucae, 1. 9. — Cf. Tamid, III. 1.

[5] Num., VI. 24.

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earnest of one still greater to come, in which Israel and all the world who awaited the coming of the Redeemer would rejoice.

The instant the priest and levite deputed to assist the High Priest left the Holy of Holies, an angel suddenly appeared on the right side of the altar. Zachary trembled at the apparition and terror took possession of his soul. No doubt he then recalled the axiom sanctioned by the experience of the ancients, that no one could see God and live.[1] And it was through the angels that God usually deigned to manifest Himself to those whom He honoured by His vision.[2] But the heavenly messenger began at once to speak. "Fear not, Zachary, for thy prayer is heard: and thy wife Elizabeth shall bear thee a son; and thou shalt call his name John; and thou shalt have joy and gladness, and many shall rejoice at his birth: for he shall be great before the Lord, and shall drink no wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost even from his mother's womb: and he shall convert many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. And he shall go before Him in the spirit and power of Elias, that he may turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the incredulous to the wisdom of the just, to prepare for the Lord a perfect people.[3] "

As the harmonious tones of the angel's voice fell upon his ear, Zachary became reassured. The

[1] Judic., VI. 22—25 etc.
[2] Genes. XVIII. 1—3. — Isai. VI. 5 etc.
[3] Luke, I. 13—18.

angel remained at the right side of the altar, and this favourable omen was confirmed by the promise of joy so long deferred. The child to be born should be called John, that is to say, *The Lord graciously gave*. His birth would be the presage of a happiness in which several should participate, many even of the children of Israel, and through the mystery which enveloped the rest of the prophecy, the happy father foresaw a supreme gladness, the salvation of his people and the inauguration of the kingdom of God upon earth.

But such a happiness could not but perplex him: Zachary doubted. "Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years. And the Angel answering, said to him: I am Gabriel who stand before God, and am sent to speak to thee, and to bring these good tidings. And, behold, thou shalt be dumb, and shalt not be able to speak until the day wherein these things shall come to pass; because thou hast not believed my words, which shall be fulfilled in their time."[1] Then the vision faded, like the scented vapour wafted on the air; the angel and the incense ascended together to heaven.

Such was the vision which Zachary recorded on his tablets and which he explained by gestures before the astonished people.[2] The Temple and the city were soon filled with the rumour of this prodigy. Under the porch of Solomon the Scribes discussed its nature and meaning, amidst the

[1] Luke, 1. 18—21.
[2] Id., *ibid.*, 22.

respectful silence of those who believed in it; in the Synagogues they recalled the apparitions of Mambre,[1] Bethel,[2] Saraa,[3] celebrated by the births which they had preceded. But how much more worthy of admiration was this vision, had they been able to see in what it differed from the others! God glorified beforehand, no longer His faithful servants, but His immediate precursor, the first of His apostles and martyrs, the man of whom He, Himself, should say that there was none greater among the children of men.[4]

The week passed, Zachary returned to his home, and a short time after Elizabeth announced to him that God had fulfilled His promise. Ashamed of this long-delayed happiness, the poor woman hid herself from all eyes, keeping for herself the secret which she was reluctant to divulge,—"what God had done for her when He deigned to deliver her from the reproach which overwhelmed her in the sight of men."[5] The most natural wish of a childless woman who felt that she had incurred blame from which she was about to be exonerated would be, we think, a desire to show to all, and as soon as possible, that she had not deserved it. But Saint Elizabeth was influenced by a higher motive when she withdrew from all

[1] Genes. XVIII. 2 and following.

[2] Ibid. XXVIII. 13—19.

[3] Jud. XIII. 3 and following.

[4] Matth., XI. 11: "Non surrexit inter natos mulierum major Joanne Baptista."

[5] Luke, 1. 25: "Quia sic fecit mihi Dominus, in diebus quibus respexit auferre opprobrium meum inter homines."

eyes, and kept the secret of her happiness for herself and her spouse, with whom she shared also, in a measure, the punishment inflicted upon him by the angel. The weeks and months which preceded the birth of her child were thus a time of fervent prayer, of holy retirement, of acts of thanksgiving, and of spiritual preparation for the maternity which she had obtained in so wonderful a manner, after having ceased to hope for or desire it.[1]

But it was not pleasing to God that the secret should be kept beyond certain limits. It elicited very little notice among the neighbours of Elizabeth, as is usually the case in oriental life, when nothing happens to draw each family from its own seclusion. The spouse of Zachary, in her sadness and humiliation, had very little attraction for the people whose hearths she no longer frequented. Besides, maternity came to her at seed time, and in the rainy season,[2] that is to say, at a time little suited for the interchange of curtesies among neighbours. She had, then, sufficient excuse to continue her ordinary life by remaining in seclusion till her sixth month. The servants must have ascertained the state of their mistress, but with a discretion usual in their position, which allowed them neither to ask, nor say anything. God reserved for Himself the right to speak of it, and the confidante He chose was none other than the

[1] P. Coleridge, *Préparation de l'Incarnation*, c. VIII.

[2] The end of *Tischri* or during the course of *Marcheschvan* (September and October).

mother of the Redeemer, who was as yet unaware of her high destiny.[1]

The angel Gabriel soon reappeared in the land of Israel. This time he again prophesied the coming of a child by miracle, but what a difference between the two, great though the first was to be! Elizabeth was to give birth to a man without equal, Mary should be the mother of a God made man for the salvation of humanity. Like the priest, but not for the same reason, the Virgin seemed to doubt, and the angel gave her as a proof of the power that had overshadowed her, the unexpected maternity of her cousin.[2] He who makes the desert blossom,[3] could He not also make virginity fruitful?[4] "Behold," said the Archangel, "thy cousin Elizabeth, she also hath conceived a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month with her that is called barren; because no word shall be impossible with God." To these words, Mary, taught suddenly of God, immediately replied — "Behold the handmaid be it done to me according to thy word."

The angel returned to heaven and the Virgin immediately set out for Judea, hastening to this friend whom she felt was predestined to be the first to receive, on earth, the revelation of

[1] According to Christopher de Castro (De Deipara), Anne, the mother of Mary, was the daughter of a priest of the family of Abia.

[2] Luke, 1, 36.

[3] Isai., XXXV, 1: "The wilderness shall rejoice, and shall flourish like the lily."

[4] Zachar., IX. 17: "Germinans virgines."

the salvation of Israel. Happy Elizabeth, to whom no other woman could be compared, since she merited above all others, and in the first moments of His mortal life, the right to salute the Son of God made man! But more happy still, as we shall soon see, since the happiness of mothers is caused, in a special manner, by that which pertains to their children!

April brought back the sunlight; winter was over and gone, the rains had done their work and the land was covered with innumerable flowers, which delighted the eyes of the traveller, while the spring sun warmed the atmosphere. The voice of the turtle, so dear to the prophet, was heard, the fig-trees were covered with buds, and the flower-clad vines perfumed the air with their penetrating fragrance.[1] From the terrace of her house Elizabeth looked upon hill and plain rivalling each other in verdure; everywhere, as in herself, there energised the vigour of a new life. Though unable to understand, she felt the approach of a joy, exceptional in its nature and intensity: but a few moments, and her soul shall overflow with gratitude to God, who overwhelmed her with His favours. All at once, while her mind was filled with these sweet dreams, the customary salutation, "Peace be with you!"[2] pronounced by an unknown

[1] Cantic., II, 11—13: "Jam hiems transiit, imber abiit et recessit. Flores apparuerunt in terra nostra. . . Vox turturis audita est. . . Ficus protulit grossos suos: vineae florentes dederunt odorem suum."

[2] "Pax tecum!" is the Palestinian greeting: "Salamalek!"

voice, struck upon her ears. It was Mary, who bent before her in token of affectionate respect.[1] Immediately a trembling seized her; she felt her child leap within her, the power of the Holy Spirit took possession of her, and in broken accents, she exclaimed: "Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb! . . . And whence is this to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? . . . For behold, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy! . . . And blessed art thou that hast believed; because those things shall be accomplished that were spoken to thee by the Lord."[1] Thus Elizabeth did not invoke the blessing of Heaven on her young relative in return for the peace that she had wished her: benediction and grace were in Mary, and came from her as from an overflowing source. By the light which illumined her soul, the spouse of Zachary recognised the greatness of the Virgin-Mother and the honour which she had conferred in bringing to her house the King of Kings. But she was not alone in her amazement and veneration: the infant who slept in her bosom awoke and made an effort to meet his Redeemer, who was veiled also from profane eyes, but visible to the Baptist in the tabernacle where it pleased the Messiah to remain still enclosed. Let us listen to him speaking in the words of Chrysostom: "I see the Lord who shortens for me the allotted time of nature, and I do not

[1] Luke, I, 40: "And she entered into the house of Zachary, and saluted Elizabeth."

wait for the hour of ordinary birth. What need have I of these nine months? The Eternal is within me; I will go forth from this obscure retreat and will publish, as far as I may, all these wonders. I am the forerunner: I desire to announce the coming of the Christ. I am a herald: I will announce the manifestation of the Son of God in the flesh. My voice shall resound, and, blessing my father's tongue, it shall be revived so that it shall be heard with mine. I will raise my voice and will give my mother new life! . . . Behold, then, Him who breaks down all obstacles; why do I remain enchained in this prison which I wish to leave? The Word is come to regenerate all things, and I remain inactive! I must go, I must run to meet Him and exclaim to all mankind: 'Behold the Lamb of God, Behold Him who takest away the sins of the world!' "[2]

By these raptures we may imagine the tenderness of the Master's love for His precursor; a love as wonderful as the life which produced it, and that which it visited, but whose precociousness reveals to us more clearly its divine character. How much more will he be loved later on, whom we see already so favoured! When the head of the Baptist shall have fallen, the Gospel will not need to tell us of the Redeemer's sorrow;[3] to understand the mystery we shall have the recollection of the moment when the greatest of the children of men,

[1] Luke, I, 42—45.

[2] S. Joann. Chrys., *Serm.* ap. Metaphrast., mense Julii

[3] Cf. Matth., XIV, 13; Mark, VI, 30—31.

sanctified by the approach of the Word made flesh in the bosom of the Virgin Mary, leaped in the bosom of Elizabeth.

The Holy Spirit wished not only that Elizabeth should speak; under His inspiration Mary opened her lips and proclaimed the wonders of this hour in a canticle, the poetry of which far surpasses that of the hymns sung to the God of Israel by Moses or Deborah[1]: "My soul doth magnify the Lord: and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour; because He hath regarded the humility of His handmaid. For behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. For He that is mighty hath done great things to me: and holy is His Name! And His mercy is from generation to generation, to them that fear Him. He hath showed might in His arm; He hath scattered the proud in the conceit of their heart. He hath put down the mighty from their seat, and hath exalted the humble. He hath filled the hungry with good things: and the rich He hath sent empty away. He hath received Israel His servant, being mindful of His mercy. As He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and his seed for ever!"[2]

The Virgin-Mother seemed to have before her mind all the thanksgivings that the patriarchs, kings, and prophets of her race had addressed to Heaven from the first days of the chosen people, for the benefits of the present and the hopes of the future; above all, for this hope of the Messiah

[1] Exod., XV, 1—21; Jud., V, 1—31.
[2] Luke, I, 46—55.

which was indeed the very life of Israel,[1] and which she saw realised, for she carried within her the Incarnate Word; the world was about to have proof of it, and the leaping of Elizabeth's child inaugurated the mission of the Precursor. She saluted, at its dawn, the day about to rise, where mercy and truth have met together: justice and peace have kissed each other.[2]

Elizabeth and Zachary contemplated her in silence. The same thought occupied the minds of both — that of the presence, in their house, of the God whom their fathers dreaded to meet, and who filled them with a serene joy. He was then veiled as He was in the flame or the cloud which hid Him from the eyes of Moses, and His words vibrated on Mary's lips, as they had on those of the Angels whom He had sent to Jacob or to Daniel; but they were not afraid in this Presence, whose meekness and gentleness revealed the Prince of Peace,[3] — the Lamb who takest away the sins of the world,[4] the God who is rich in mercy to all who call upon Him.[5] And the cause of this happiness which enraptured them was the child who, as Gabriel foretold, should go before the Lord in the spirit and power of Elias, — the child whom Elizabeth still concealed in her bosom, but whose name, given beforehand by the Angel, signified, *The Lord graciously gave*, — the child whose life had

[1] Cf. Geikie, *Life of Christ*, I, p. 109, etc.
[2] Psalm, LXXXIV, 11.
[3] Isaii, IX, 6.
[4] John, I, 29.
[5] Rom., X, 12; Ephes., II, 4.

just been manifested by a leap of gladness at the arrival of the divine visitor whom he had been the first to recognise and salute.

At the appointed time, Elizabeth gave birth to a son, around whom, eight days later, relations and friends assembled for the ceremony of circumcision. According to custom, a name was chosen for the newly-born child, and all agreed to call him Zachary, after his father, and, doubtless, after several of his ancestors also.

The mother protested: "Not so," she exclaimed, "but he shall be called John." — "There is none of thy kindred that is called by this name," the assistants replied, turning towards the father with signs of questioning surprise. Zachary took his tablets, and with a look of inspiration, as if he still heard Gabriel speak, he wrote: "John is his name!" He had scarcely finished when his tongue was loosened, his voice resounded full of holy enthusiasm. — "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, because he hath visited and wrought the redemption of his people: And hath raised up a horn of salvation to us, in the house of David, his servant. As he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets, who are from the beginning; Salvation from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us; To show mercy to our fathers; and to remember his holy covenant. The oath which he swore to Abraham our father, that he would grant to us; That being delivered from the hand of our enemies, we may serve him without fear, in holiness and justice before him, all our days. And thou, child,

shall be called the prophet of the Most High: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord, to prepare his way: To give knowledge of salvation to his people, unto the remission of their sins. Through the bowels of the mercy of our God: in which the Orient from on high hath visited us. To enlighten them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death: to direct our feet unto the way of peace."[1]

The admiration which surrounded Zachary in this solemn hour was soon spread abroad, and fear took possession of the whole mountainous region of Judea. Everyone asked: "What a one, think ye, shall this child be? For they felt that the hand of the Lord was with him,[2] and perhaps they already invested him with the power to raise up and restore Israel. But they took good care not to express their sentiments in public: Jerusalem was too near, with its suspicious tyrant, served by innumerable spies, and they were content to wait, with the wearied resignation which seemed to have become, *par excellence*, the virtue of Judea, since the last of the Asmoneans was laid in his tomb.

[1] Luke, I, 68—80.
[2] Id., ibid., 66.

Chapter V.

The Precursor.

> For this is he who was spoken of by Isaias the prophet, saying: A voice of one crying in the desert: Prepare ye the way of the Lord. Matt. III, 3.

"And the child grew up and was strengthened in spirit; and was in the deserts until the day of his manifestation to Israel."[1]

These obscure words are all that remain to us of the history of John during the first thirty years of his life. The mysterious parallel which seems to exist between the Master and him in their annunciation and birth, continues to the end of their lives, particularly in the long obscurity which surrounded the time of preparation for their public ministry. Shall we try to penetrate this shadow which envelopes John the Baptist, as we have tried to remove that which encircled the Redeemer? The attempt to do so would be profitless, and we prefer to pass on, stopping only to consider briefly those deserts[2] in which the Precursor awaited the moment of his manifestation.

Those who attach any importance to the fanciful ideas, according to which John the Baptist

[1] Luke, I, 80.

[2] Id., *ibid.*, "Et erat *in desertis*."

should have adopted the life of the Essenes,[1] trace him to the rugged ravines of *Onady-en-Nahr*, an ancient valley of the Cedron at its wildest part, that is to say, in the neighbourhood of the actual convent of Mar-Saba. Certainly it is difficult to find anything that corresponds better to our idea of a desert, and more so, to that chosen by a preacher of austere life and language. The grottos hollowed out by nature or the hand of man in the sides of these abrupt rocks above the torrent, and far from the summit, seemed to form an appropriate dwelling for these sons of the Prophets[2] who suddenly appeared in the midst of crowds, their faces emaciated and pale, their hair and beard neglected, scarcely covered with a cloak of camel's hair, as we are accustomed to represent John the Baptist.[3]

But the striped white and brown tunic, girt with a leather girdle, such as is still worn by the peasants around Bethlehem and Aïn-Kârim, has nothing in common with the white garments of the Essenes,[4] and the deserts where the son of Elizabeth dwelt have always been located by tradition in quite another part of Judea. What we call the *desert of St. John* does not correspond,

[1] Graetz, *Geschichte der Juden*, t. III; Cohen, *les Pharisiens*, t. II, c. 1. — It is curious to compare these reveries with the *Visions* of Catherine Emmerich on this subject.

[2] III Reg., XX, 35; — IV Reg., II, 3, 5, 7; VI, 1; — Amos, VII, 14, etc.

[3] Matth., III, 4: "Joannes habebat *vestimentum de pilis camelorum* et *zonam pelliceam* circa lumbos ejus."

[4] Josephus, *Antiq. Jud.*, XVIII, 11. — Cf. Stapfer, Les idées religieuses en Palestine, p. 210—211.

it is true, in its extent, to the one mentioned in the Gospel. This desert, "smiling in its flowers," is, in reality, "the summit of a mountain covered with white cistus, yellow papilionaceous plants and a quantity of various flowers and woody shrubs that scarcely rise above the ground. When we cross the ridge, we come to St. John's spring; it gushes out from a hole in the rock; — two paces from it, on a steep incline, is the grotto which the Precursor occupied." [1]

At the time of the Abbot Daniel,[2] the mountain was crowned with a thick wood, as it was when David, according to the words of the Scripture,[3] abode in the forest. It is in this sense that we understand what is meant by the desert of Juda,[4] and more so still that of Engaddi, celebrated for its vines, balm-trees, and palms[5]: a series of eminences more or less elevated, — now treeless, but formerly wooded, — cut up by ravines through which streams still flow in the rainy season, but formerly always irrigated by the water which fell from the thicket and forests. Not that there are no extensive tracts where the vegetation is burned up by the scorching sun. Then, as in our own day, the traveller passed through cool oases in

[1] F. Bovet, *Voyage en Terre Sainte*, p. 298—299.

[2] In the XII. century. (*V. Pèlerinage en Terre Sainte*, p. 132.)

[3] I Reg., XXIII, 18: "Mansitque David *in silva*. . . in locis tutissimis silvae."

[4] Matth., III, 1: "In deserto Judææ." — Cf. I Reg., XXIII, 15 and 25.

[5] I Reg., XXIV, 2; Cant., I, 13 etc.

these valleys of fire where the chalky soil crumbled under foot, and over those gloomy table-lands where one makes his way with great difficulty through thorns and flints, but from which the eye roams over a scene of exquisite beauty. From Bethlehem to the Dead Sea, from West to South-east, over a space of twenty-five or thirty kilometers as the bird flies, the deserts extended, animated only by the passing of nomadic tribes, against whom, in the time of Herod, the fortresses of Herodium and Massada had been built — a land favorable to vagrants and fugitives, because of its difficulties and its resources, — the refuge of criminals, — the asylum of outlaws, — a school to which souls devoted to solitude, and those who are preparing for a life of warfare, are naturally attracted.

The most cherished memories of Jewish antiquity linger around these places. It was here that Saul vanquished the Philistines; here that David awaited the days of his prosperity; it was here that Amos fitted himself for his ministry and thither he came back to die. The armies of Israel have passed over all this territory; at all these torrents the patriarchs have watered their flocks; on all these heights and in every wood Jehovah and Baal were alternately worshipped. Ruins alone bear testimony of them to-day, but in the first century of our era this desert teemed with a life full of charm, so that one could still, with David and Jeremiah, extol its beauties.[1]

[1] Psalm, LXIV, 13: "Pinguescent *speciosa deserti.*" — Jerem., IX, 10: "Super speciosa deserti (assumam) planctum."

At what precise date did John the Baptist enter it? We do not know, and there is no clue to the mystery. The time he resided here, it is said, with Elizabeth, after the massacre of the Innocents, however long we may suppose it to have been, could not have lasted till the day when we find him beginning to preach. Probably the death of his parents induced him to go into seclusion. An only son, not caring to continue the priestly tradition, consequently free from family ties, and wishing to liberate himself from those of the Temple, he no doubt then sought the desert, to listen in peace to the voice of Heaven. The Apostle is trained in seclusion: the prophets of the ancient Law came from the desert; Paul took refuge there after his conversion, to strengthen his soul, and the divine Master Himself has not chosen any other way. John then sought this retreat where he lived in austerity.[1] Clothed like the fellahs and shepherds, living like them on locusts and wild honey,[2] he abstained from all fermented drinks,[3] thereby resembling those ascetics venerated in the

[1] According to Sophronius (*Prat. spir.*, c. I), and Bede (*De loc. sanct.*, c. XIII), he must have inhabited a narrow cave at a place called Sapsas.

[2] Matth. III, 4: "*Esca autem ejus erat locustae et mel sylvestre.*" — (The Greeks, as well as the Jews, regarded locusts as food, like the modern Arabs, the Hindoos and the blacks of the Sahara.)

[3] Luke, I, 15: "Vinum et siceram non bibet." — (The ancients regarded John the Baptist as the founder of the monastic life. "Sicut sacerdotum principes sunt apostoli, ita et monachorum princeps, Joannes Baptista," says S. John Chrysostom, *Homil., in Marcum.*)

East as the friends of Heaven, and from among whom it selects its Mahdis, its Prophets, and Precursors.

What he refused to the flesh he gave to the spirit, by continual meditation on the prophecies, wherein he could see his own figure by the side of the Messiah.[1] But it was not a vain and inactive contemplation, by it he acquired a practical knowledge of the part allotted to him, that of forerunner, charged with preparing the way for the Messiah. To succeed, he must not only have an eloquence animated by divine inspiration like Elias, the remembrance of whom, recalled by the Angel, was always present to his memory; but his words should bear fruit in his works, and the exercise of the highest virtue was not too great for such a mission.

Of this preparation the Gospel tells us nothing, no doubt because subsequent events were ordained to reveal it; and in fact it does not require any great effort to understand to what preparatory work the virtue of the greatest of the children of men owed its perfection. Flowers and fruits bear testimony to good seed and to the soil — and also to the man, a fellow-labourer with God, who insures the growth of the plants watered by a loving hand.[2]

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius[3],

[1] Isai., XI, 3; Malach., III, 1.

[2] I. Cor. III, 6: "Ego plantavi, Apollo rigavit, Deus autem incrementum dedit."

[3] That is to say from his partnership in the empire, in the year 765 of Rome, the 12th of the common era, which assigns the appearance of John the Baptist on the shores of the Jordan to the year 780.

Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod tetrarch of Galilee, under the pontificate of Annas and Caiphas, — the voice of God was heard in the desert by John, the son of Zachary,[1] ordering him to go and preach. He obeyed at once,[2] and descended into the plain of the Jordan to join the travellers who came to the fords near Bethania and Betharaba,[3] whether from the west or down from the country of Moab. The passage was difficult and necessitated a delay going or coming, according to the bank from which they crossed. Coming from Jerusalem, the caravans naturally halted for the night, between Jericho and the woods which bordered the right bank.[4] When they arrived from Moab, by the Onady-Charib, they were forced to stay at the same place to dress their ranks after the passage of the river and thickets. When travelling, the Oriental moves slowly and rests willingly, particularly in the neighbourhood of water, at night-fall, when a large party promises considerable pleasure and security. If the hot hours of the day invite sleep, the freshness of the

[1] Luke, III, 1—2.

[2] This we may understand as his first preaching, in the desert itself, or on its confines, where is still shown a rock which may have been the pulpit of the Precursor. (Cf. Sepp, Vie de N—S J—C., 2nd part, 2nd sect., Ch. 2,) After which John would have come to the borders of the Jordan.

[3] John, I, 28. — Cf. Judic., VII, 24. — The desert of Juda ended on the north, towards Jericho, and the mouth of the Jordan. Bethania would have been situated on the right bank of the river, Betharaba on the left, according to Sepp, *loc. cit.*, c. IV.

[4] At the passage designated by the name of Bethania.

night disposes him to relish the interminable recitations of the story-tellers, the monotonous songs of the Guitarists,[1] and the slow measures of the dancing-girls. Then, sometimes, amid a respectful silence, the voice of some dervish is raised to explain the sacred word, as a learned man or an apostle, with all the subtleties of a scholastic and all the ardour of one specially enlightened. With impassive countenances, the audience follows every movement of the speaker's soul, now excited almost to frenzy, now wrapt in a dream of Paradise. Nothing has such power over the Eastern imagination as those passionate discourses, the result of which may be, perhaps, at a given moment, the insurrection of a tribe, and the ruin of a whole country.

The neighbourhood of Jericho, a town essentially cosmopolitan, attracts to the borders of the Jordan a host of visitors, — the curious in quest of novelties, Pharisees seeking new proselytes, women anxious to display their charms, soldiers guarding and superintending the encampments,[2] — a heterogenious assembly at first sight, but in reality composed of elements identical in susceptibility and enthusiasm. It is in the centre of this crowd that the son of Zachary suddenly appears, as an apparition of ancient times, and proclaims his mysterious doctrine.

[1] "Guitarists", singers who accompany themselves on the guitar (*Kouitta*), or on a violin of two strings (*Rbab*).

[2] Sepp (Vie de N—S J—C.) considers that these were the soldiers composing the guard of the Temple, but the words of the sacred text seem to apply equally to the Roman soldiers and the mercenaries of Herod.

— "Do penance, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. For this is he who was spoken of by Isaias the prophet saying: 'A voice of one crying in the desert: Prepare ye the way of the Lord; make straight His paths: Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways plain: and all flesh shall see the salvation of God'[1] — "For this is He, of whom it is written: Behold I send my Angel before thy face, who shall prepare thy way before thee."[2]

The austere appearance, and the vibrating voice of the preacher, forcibly arrested their attention; then, when they recognised the high position of his family, the sanctity of his life, the depth of his knowledge, their first impression was soon changed into enthusiasm. It was the region of the Jordan that first responded to his words, soon carrying with it Judea, and even Jerusalem itself,[3] in one of those irresistible tides of public opinion that mark a decisive moment in the life of a people. It was of such moments that a historian has justly said: "When a great revolution is about to be accomplished in the world, and a new day in its history is to succeed the day that is passed, there is often stirred up in the hearts of the people a certain feeling which reveals to them this near future, and causes them to foresee, in some way,

[1] Matth., III, 2; — Mark, I, 3; — Luke, III, 4, (quoting Isai., XL, 3).

[2] Mark, 1, 2 (quoting Malach., III, 1).

[3] Matth., III, 5; — Mark, I, 5.

whence should come the man whom Providence has chosen as the instrument of its eternal decrees."[1] In John were realised the dreams and hopes of Israel, in comparing himself to the Angel Precursor of the Messiah, and proclaiming himself ready to initiate the kingdom for which they had waited so long. No one was surprised at his call to penance, that is to say, to the purification necessary for the children of the new kingdom.[2] — All struck their breasts, confessing their sins, and went down joyfully into the waters of the Jordan to be baptised.[3]

There were many poor among this multitude: John took great care to recommend them to the charity of the rich, when they asked him, "What then shall we do? — He that hath two coats, let him give to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do in like manner."[4]

The publicans dared to brave public scorn and drew near him: "Master, what shall we do? — Do nothing more than that which is appointed you."

The soldiers came in their turn. "And what shall we do? — Do violence to no man: neither

[1] Sepp, *Vie de N.—S. J.—C.*, loc. cit.

[2] The Talmud says (Sanhedrin, fol. 97, 2): "Si Israelitae poenitentiam agunt, tunc per Goëlem (Messiam) liberantur."

[3] Matth., III, 6; — Mark, I, 5; — Luke, III, 7; — John I, 25-28. — Nothing was more natural to the minds of the Jews than this invitation to baptism. It was usual among them for proselytes, as among the Essenes for new adepts. (*Ghemara* de Babyl. — Cf. Tacit., *Hist.* V, 5.)

[4] Luke, III, 11.

calumniate any man: and be content with your pay.''[1]

The Pharisees and Sadducees could not stand aside, were it only from curiosity, or a desire of display before the populace. They came also in great numbers, putting off their garments to go down into the water. The preacher's tone changed at once; his voice hissed like a scourge. "Ye offspring of vipers, who hath showed you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth, therefore, fruit worthy of penance; and do not begin to say: We have Abraham for our father. For I say to you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children to Abraham. For now the axe is laid to the root of the tree. Every tree, therefore, that bringeth not forth good fruit, shall be cut down, and cast into the fire!''[2]

The hatred of the Pharisees and Sadducees against the Precursor dates from this day, and their vengeance was not long delayed; but while waiting a favourable opportunity, they simulated, so as not to irritate the people, whom they hoped to make their accomplices.

The enthusiasm, however, steadily increased, even to the point of regarding the Baptist, not as the herald of the Messiah, but as the Messiah Himself, against which error John energetically protested. "I indeed baptise you with water unto penance: but He who is to come after me, is stronger than I,

[1] Luke, III, 12–15. — The allusion to the informers is worthy of note.

[2] Matth., III, 7–11; — Luke, III, 7.

whose shoes I am not worthy to carry: He shall baptise you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. Whose fan is in His hand; and He will thoroughly cleanse His floor, and gather His wheat into the barn; but the chaff He will burn with unquenchable fire."[1]

The preaching of the Baptist commenced probably in the autumn[2] of the year 28,[3] which was the beginning, according to some authors, of a sabbatical year, that is to say, a year of absolute rest for the land of Israel.[4] The cessation of work at this period increased the number of his audience, and the plain of Jericho was covered with tents which sheltered the pilgrims coming from Galilee, Samaria, Peraea, and the surrounding regions. Winter dispersed them, but they returned in the spring of the year 29, almost in as great numbers, and quite as enthusiastic. When the heat rendered the Ghôr[5] uninhabitable, the pious colony betook itself to the north, near the village of Salim, at a place called Ennon, or the

[1] Matth., III, 11–12; — Mark, I, 8; — Luke, III, 16.

[2] In the month of Tisri, which corresponds to our months of September and October. The Jews regarded it as the most suitable for bathing and baptism. On the other hand, it was the richest in festivals, and afforded the greatest opportunities to pilgrims and travellers.

[3] Or 27, according to the starting point adopted by modern chronology.

[4] Fouard, Vie de N.—S. J.—C., cit. Wieseler, Chronologische Synopse, p. 204.

[5] This is the name that the natives give to the valley of the Jordan.

Springs, because of its abundant waters;[1] then, in the autumn it came back to the ford of Bethabara[2], where there was reserved for it the most wonderful of scenes.

The octave of the Feast of Tabernacles was over, and the multitude hastening to Jerusalem, returned towards the Jordan to regain the region bordering on both sides of the river. The Galileans were numerous there, and the Precursor had disciples among them whose renown would one day be known to the entire world. But he did not know what illustrious proselyte he should meet in Galilee.

On one of the first days of the month of November,[3] he beheld coming towards him a man whom he had never seen before,[4] but whom he recognised[5] by a secret inspiration, to be He of whom God had said to him, "He upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, He it is that baptiseth with the Holy Ghost."[6] — And John wished to prevent His going down into the Jordan: "I ought to be baptised by Thee; and comest Thou to me?" And Jesus

[1] It is probable that John the Baptist did not await the year 30, that is, the end of his ministry, to settle at Ennon, during the hot weather.

[2] We adopt here the most rational interpretation of the Gospel text, obscure though it be, in this instance.

[3] S. Epiphanus says: "the 6th of the ides of November," that is, about the 7th of that month. — Chevallier places this date about the 1st of November.

[4] John, I, 31-33: "Ego nesciebam eum."

[5] Matth., III, 14.

[6] John, I, 33.

answering, said to him: "Suffer it now: for so it becometh us to fulfil all justice!"

John submitted, and poured water on the head of the divine suppliant. Immediately a brilliant light shone on the surface of the river,[1] the heavens opened, the Holy Spirit appeared in the form of a dove, and the voice of the Most High cried out: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."[2] The multitude looked on astounded and afraid, and John bowed down in adoration, while Jesus, smiling and majestic, ascended the steep bank and disappeared into the wood. No one had dared to stop Him, because it was not yet His wish to mingle among men. The Spirit led him to the desert,[3] where He was going to suffer temptation, and to thus finish the preparation for His apostolic life.

About three months passed, during which the son of Elizabeth must often have recalled his infantine recognition of the Saviour. Then also the Son of God was as one unknown to him; but he had felt His presence in the obscurity in which he was concealed, and his whole being had trembled at the coming of the Creator to His creature. Impatient as he was to break his bonds, in order to pay Him homage, he had not been able to escape in time to see Him even at a distance,

[1] Addition to the *Codex Vercellensis* (Migne, *Patrol. lat.*, t. XII, p. 155), which is found again in S. Justin (*Dialog. cum Tryphone*).

[2] Matth., III, 17; — Mark, I, 10–11; — Luke III, 21–22; — John, I, 32.

[3] Matth., IV, 1; — Luke, IV, 1.

till this day which had come so unexpectedly; but, for the second time, the Master had eluded his adoring love. While his astonished rapture impeded his pursuing Jesus, an ardent desire to find Him again burned within his soul, and his eyes searched the crowd incessantly, to see if there were any trace of the Messiah. But day succeeded day, bringing back the winter and dispersing his disciples: the place was again a desert, into which John re-entered, not without some sadness, but with the hope, however, that the former heavenly intercourse would still be maintained. We may believe, in fact, that God did not leave him any longer in trouble, as formerly He had not forsaken Daniel, that other man of desires,[1] to whom Gabriel came to foretell the day and the hour of the anointing of the Saint of Saints.[2] This is the mystery that we are never allowed to penetrate. Let us pass on then, and return to the banks of the Jordan, where spring found the multitude reassembled, eager to hear the words of the Precursor. The Sanhedrin began to feel uneasy about these sermons, the echo of which had penetrated even to the Holy City.

In the beginning of February,[3] a deputation of Pharisees — priests and levites — was sent from Jerusalem to ask John: "Who art thou? Art thou the Christ?" — "No," he replied without hesita-

[1] Daniel, IX, 23: "Vir desideriorum."

[2] Id., *ibid.*, 24: "Ungatur sanctus sanctorum."

[3] According to the calculation of Chevallier (Récits évangéliques, p. 117). We should rather say sometime during February. The temperature is then very mild, in the plain of Jericho.

tion, "I am not the Christ." — "Art thou Elias?" — "I am not." — "Art thou the Prophet?"[1] — And he answered: "No." Then they said to him: "Who art thou, that we may give an answer to them that sent us? What sayest thou of thyself?" — "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness: Make straight the way of the Lord, as the prophet Isaias said."[2] — "Why then dost thou baptise, if thou be not Christ, nor Elias, nor the prophet?" — "I baptise in water: but there hath stood one in the midst of you, whom you know not. The same is He that shall come after me, who is preferred before me; the latchet of whose shoe I am not worthy to loose."[3]

The messengers of the Sanhedrin withdrew, pondering on what this enigmatical language could mean, and resolved to keep strict watch over the Precursor. It was clear that he held them in aversion; they saw in him an enemy, and behind him someone more powerful still, who would be the cause of their approaching downfall. This

[1] Cf. Deuter., XVIII, 15; — Act., III, 22, and VII, 37. — Some people believed that this prophet was Enoch come to life again. (Cf. Genes., V, 24; — Eccles., XLIV, 16; — Hebr., XI, 5; — Apoc., XI, 3.)

[2] Isai., XL, 3. — This is rather a reference than a quotation. (Cf. Isai., LVII, 14, and LXII, 10.)

[3] John, I, 19–28. — This allusion to the strings of the shoes will perhaps astonish those who may have seen the Orientals dragging their loose slippers along the ways of Asia Minor and Palestine. But one still finds in certain regions the sandal tied above the ankle, by a regular thong of leather with a knot sufficiently complicated to explain the intervention of a servant. The shoe is adapted for travelling, and the loose slipper to a sedentary life.

straightening of the ways of the Lord aimed at their intrigues, doubtless already understood by this mysterious censurer, whose very name they knew not, even though he lived in their midst, as inaccessible as if he were invisible, to judge of him by the humble veneration of the Baptist.[1] Who could this redresser of wrongs be? A prophet, about whom the popular imagination was occupied with more or less reason? Elias, whose reappearance, it was said, was near at hand? The Christ Himself, whose time had nearly come? What did it matter? Their own day was over, and the warnings of John were the knell of their last hour. Were they satisfied to give up their prestige without striving to maintain the least portion of it? The future should prove that their thoughts were very different.

The following day, the confessor experienced the joy which he had so ardently desired. Jesus came to him! A cry escaped his lips! "Behold the Lamb of God; behold Him who taketh away the sins of the world! This is He of whom I said: After me cometh a man, who is preferred before me, because He was before me. And I knew Him not: but that He may be made manifest in Israel, therefore am I come baptising in water. I saw the Spirit coming down as a dove from heaven, and He remained upon Him. And I knew Him not: but He who sent me to baptise in water said to me: He upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descend-

[1] Mark, I, 7: "Cujus non sum dignus *procumbens* solvere corrigiam calceamentorum ejus."

ing, and remaining on Him, He it is that baptiseth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw; and I gave testimony that this is the Son of God![1]

The crowd listened, but did not understand; the hour was not yet propitious. On the following day, when John was speaking familiarly to two of his disciples, Jesus passed by, and the Baptist exclaimed as before: "Behold the Lamb of God!" This time he succeeded: the two disciples at once followed Jesus, who, perceiving them, said, "What seek you?" — "Master, where dwellest thou?" — "Come, and see!"[2]

They accompanied Him to His retreat and remained with Him for the rest of the day: it was about the tenth hour, that is to say, four o'clock in the evening, according to our computation. They resolved never to leave Him, and becoming the first fruits of His ministry, they strove at once to bring others to Him, who would be faithful. Andrew called his brother Simon: John ran to seek his brother James, — both spoke the same words, "We have found the Messiah!"[3] Simon and James, and soon after, Bartholomew, joined them, to follow the footsteps of Jesus, thus becoming the foundation of the Church. John could now rejoice at the fulfilment of his mission; he had pointed out the Messiah to the world, and had initiated His Kingdom. The task allotted to the Precursor did not go further.

[1] John, I, 29–35.
[2] Id., *ibid*, 38–39.
[3] John, I, 41: "**Invenimus Messiam.**"

Jesus went on His way to Nazareth; but He was never again to come in contact with the Baptist, although the latter also reascended the Jordan to establish himself at Salim, almost on the frontiers of Galilee.[1] Before the Master visited Samaria, the Servant had rendered Him the supreme testimony of his blood, behind the walls of Machærus.[2]

Herod Antipas lived usually at Tiberias,[3] the town which had been rebuilt by him in honour of Tiberius,[4] and which became one of the most charming and splendid cities of Syria. Perched on the borders of the lake of Genezareth (to which it sometimes gives its name)[5], on the eastern slope of smiling hills, in the midst of verdure and flowers,[6] it was the rendezvous of all the voluptuous cosmopolitans by whom Palestine had been polluted since the coming of the Herods. The Jews never entered it,[7] particularly the Rabbis and Pharisees, and the people who lived there were all strangers, even in their appearance. They had baths, a stadium, porticos, statues, all in imitation of Rome, and the monarch was surrounded with a

[1] In Samaria.—S. Hieron., *De loc. hebr.*, and *De nomin. hebr.* — Cf. Burchard, pars I, c. VII, 25.

[2] Josephus, *Antiq.*, XVIII, V. 2.

[3] Now *Tabariyeh*, between *Migdal* (Magdala), to the North, and Kerac (Tarichee), to the South.

[4] Josephus, Antiq. Jud., XVIII, 11, 3.

[5] John, VI, 1, and 23.

[6] The Orientals place on this spot one of the numerous paradises of their legends.

[7] Talmud of Jerus., *Schebouoth*, IX, 1.

pagan splendour which was offensive to all national and religious sentiment.

But what shocked the eyes and the minds of the people most, was the incestuous and adulterous union of Antipas and his niece, — the wife of his brother Philip,[1] whom several years before, he had carried off and married, in spite of every law. If he had still a remnant of shame left, she preserved no circumspection, and the audacity of the scandal added to its enormity. At Jerusalem, it was said[2], cautious murmurs assailed the guilty pair when they went to the Temple for the great feasts, but at Tiberias no one would have dared to risk a sign of disapprobation. John the Baptist took upon himself to avenge the public conscience, and the king meeting him on his way, perhaps in the character of a proselyte more or less sincere, the Precursor hurled in his face the heroic protestation: "It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife!"[3]

Herod, trembling with rage and shame, ordered the arrest of the prophet, without, however, making an attempt on his life, on account of the people,[4] and perhaps also because of the admiration which he shared with them. No doubt there was

[1] Herod Philip, son of the second Mariamne, and fourth son of Herod the Great. He must not be confounded with Philip, son of Cleopatra, born several years after Herod Antipas, and who was tetrarch of Iturea.

[2] Cf. Renan, Vie de Jésus, etc.

[3] Matth., XIV, 4: "Non licet tibi habere uxorem fratris tui."

[4] Josephus, Bell. Jud., VII, VI, 1–2.

more fear than sympathy in this admiration. Antipas was more superstitious then sceptical, and having little more of faith than of morals, he dreaded, nevertheless, the vengeance of the God in whom he did not believe. So he contented himself, after the clandestine arrest,[1] with taking precautions against any attempt at a rescue, by sending the prisoner to the castle of Machærus[2], an inaccessible and gloomy fortress built by the Asmoneans on the torrent of Zerga-Ma'in, in the mountains to the east of the Dead Sea. John the Baptist was kept there under strict supervision[3]; but he could receive the visits of his disciples and continue among them a ministry which was formidable, in the opinion of Herod, only when exercised in public. All fear of a sedition averted, he was indifferent to everything else, and even took pleasure in discoursing with his captive, of whom he willingly took counsel on certain occasions.[4]

But it happened that the fidelity of the disciples of John to their unfortunate master engendered a

[1] What the words "Traditus est Joannes" indicate, seems to suppose an act of treason. According to Sepp this should have taken place on the 27th of May. (Vie de J.—C., t. II, p. 38.)

[2] Or Macherous (*M'Kann*, in Arabic). — The Jews called it the *Black Castle* or the *Furnace*, on account of the colour of the earth, burnt by the sun. According to Josephus, it was the strongest place in Palestine, after Jerusalem.

[3] Matth., XI, 2; — Mark, VI, 17; — Luke, III, 20.

[4] Mark, VI, 20: "Audito eo multa faciebat, et libenter eum audiebat."

spite against the ever-increasing success of Jesus[1], and the conversations of Machærus soon proved to the Precursor the necessity of a further testimony in favour of the Messiah. This time, therefore, he wished to give Him a character more solemn and more efficacious. By his order, two of his followers — perhaps the two most perverse — asked Jesus this singular question: "Art thou He that art to come, or do we look for another?" Jesus at this time had worked several miracles, and seeing the intention of the Precursor, replied: "Go and relate to John what you have heard and seen. The blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead rise again, the poor have the Gospel preached to them: And blessed is he that shall not be scandalised in me.[2]"

It is easy to understand what these messengers felt, but the strangeness of their proceeding might have injured the prestige of John in the estimation of his disciples, and Jesus wished to efface this unfavourable impression at once. Therefore He said to the multitude: "What went ye out into the desert to see? A reed shaken with the wind? . . . A man clothed in soft garments? Behold, they that are clothed in soft garments are in the houses of kings. But what went ye out to see? A prophet? . . . Yea, I tell you: and more than a prophet. For this is he of whom it is written: Behold, I send my Angel before thy face, who shall

[1] Meschler, *Méditations sur la vie de Jésus-Christ*, p. 402. — Cf. Matth., IX, 14; — Mark, II, 18; — John, III, 26.

[2] Matth., XI, 2-6; — Luke, VII, 18-24.

prepare thy way before thee. Amen I say to you, there hath not risen among them that are born of women a greater than John the Baptist!"[1] At this striking testimony, the multitude, among whom could be seen several publicans who had been baptised by the Precursor, burst forth into praises of God; while the Pharisees and Scribes, scoffing at this baptism, refused to understand the final words of Jesus: "Yet he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than John the Baptist.[2]"

No more glorious crown could encircle the brow of any mortal upon earth; but glory sometimes costs dearly, and the more estimable it is, the greater the price paid for it. The Baptist was about to experience this truth.

Herodias longed for his death, and never ceased by intrigue to obtain her desire.[3] Antipas resisted, not that the shedding of blood frightened him, but that he feared a popular outburst, as we have already said. The strength of Machærus, with its impregnable defences, reassured him a little, and it was easy to foresee the day when the machinations of this abandoned woman would triumph over the objections of her accomplice. This accursed day was the tenth of the month of Ab[4], a sorrowful date in the Jewish calendar, because it recalled to the people the malediction pronounced in the desert against those who, coming from

[1] Matth., XI, 7–12; — Luke, VII, 24–29.
[2] Matth., XI, 11; — Luke, VII, 28.
[3] Mark, VI, 19.
[4] Sepp, Vie de Jésus-Christ, t. II, p. 102.

Egypt, should never enter the Promised Land,[1] — and also, because on the same day Nabuchodonosor had destroyed the Temple of Solomon.[2] If the contemporaries of Herod and John the Baptist could have read the future, they would have been able to add to these misfortunes a greater still, the final ruin of Israel. It was on the 10th of the month of Ab, in fact, that Titus was to set fire to the Sanctuary of Jerusalem to expiate the deicide, in the desolation predicted by Daniel.[3]

But this day of mourning for true Israelites was to Herod a day of joy, because on it he celebrated the anniversary of his accession to power,[4] or that of his birth, to take literally the expression of the Gospel.[5] Therefore he assembled in his palace of Machærus the principal state officials, the chief officers of his army, and the nobles of Galilee. During the banquet, the guests were given the surprise of an uncommon interlude instead of the entertainment usually provided[6]; it was the entrance of Salome, the daughter of Herodias, to dance for them. Perhaps she wished to show that she had been educated like the Romans, and could rival the patricians, whose refined corruption Cicero

[1] Num., XIV, 22–23.

[2] II, Paral., XXXVI, 19.

[3] Daniel, IX, 26–27.

[4] Cf. *Nov. Testam. ex Talmude*, p. 90.

[5] Matth., XIV, 6; — Mark, VI, 21.

[6] Josephus, Antiq. Jud., XII, 4.

ridiculed.[1] Young, beautiful, seductive,[2] she compelled their approbation; and the king, scarcely conscious of what he did, said to her, as Assuerus of old said to Esther, "Ask of me what thou wilt: whatsoever thou shalt ask I will give thee, though it be the half of my kingdom."[3]

It was customary for Eastern monarchs to commit those acts of imprudence, when the wine had gone to their heads, to quote the expression of the Scripture.[4] They sometimes repented them, without having the resource of Assuerus, because their orders, when obeyed, brought irreparable consequences. It was thus with Herod's promise. The young girl at once took counsel with her mother. "What shall I ask?" The reply had long been ready: "The head of John the Baptist!" Without even dreaming of the enormity of such an act, Salome re-entered the banquet hall and said insolently: "I will that forthwith thou give me in a dish, the head of John the Baptist."[5]

[1] Cicero, Pro Murena, VI. — M. Renan does not admit that this was anything but a *dance of a grave character* (Vie de Jésus, c. XI); but his opinion is of no value among those who know the East and ancient customs. — Cf. Schol., Bob., *p. Sext.*, p. 304.

[2] Visconti (Iconographie grecque, Supplément,—planche 47, no. 12) has preserved for us a little bronze medal of Salome. The head is turned to the left, the figure is pleasing, and of a strongly marked Jewish type.

[3] Esther, VII, 1-2: "Etiamsi dimidiam partem regni mei petieris, impetrabis."

[4] Id., *ibid.*, 2: "Postquam vino incaluerat."

[5] Mark, VI, 25: "*Volo* ut *protinus* des mihi in *disco* caput Joannis Baptistae." S. Matthew (XIV, 8) is still more precise: "ὧδε — even here in this dish."

The head of a man was of little value in the eyes of these eastern tyrants, and the abominable request of Herodias did not surprise men who were accustomed to shed blood at random.[1] On this occasion, however, Antipas hesitated for a moment and became troubled: the head she demanded was too valuable for the hands of this child! Nobility, genius, sanctity, — must he cut down all this in its full development, at the imminent risk of incensing the people, Rome also perhaps, and, who knows? — the God, of whom John the Baptist spoke so powerfully? The anxious eyes of the king turned from Salome to the assembled guests, as if to seek their intervention, but no one dared to take the responsibility. Royal inebriates had strange ways of proceeding, and the wisest course was to leave them a free field. Doubtless, some thought of the cunning rage of the drunken potentate of whom the Psalmist speaks,[2] others, of the legendary transports of Alexander,[3] and none were inclined to incur the anger of the prince, or the resentment of his adviser.

However, Salome stamped her foot, and the rings of her anklets tinkled, as if to remind him of his pledged faith, while her eyes seemed to count

[1] They had usually near them *chaouchs*, or executioners, to carry out their sentences, — "spiculatores . . . qui nudato gladio hominum amputant cervices" (Jul. Firmicus, VIII, 26, ap. Forcellini, Vo. Spiculator).

[2] Psalm, LXXVII, 65: "Excitatus . . . tanquam potens carpulatus a vino et percussit inimicos suos in posteriora."

[3] Quintus Curtius, *Vita Alexandri*, lib. VIII.—Plutarch Arrien, *De Expedit. Alexandri*, lib. IV.

the witnesses of his promise. Herod had not the courage to retract his oath, as much on her account as through human respect, and he issued the fatal order. One of the executioners left the room, which he soon re-entered, carrying on a dish of agate the bleeding head of the martyr.[1]

Salome took it from his hands, and brought it to her mother.[2] The Gospel throws a veil over the scene which followed, but the memory of which tradition has preserved. The odious woman had letters, and remembered her journey to Rome, the voluptuous and cruel world, whither she had gone to plead the cause of her associate. Fulvia, the worthy spouse of Mark Anthony, had taken the bleeding head of Cicero on her knees, and had pierced the tongue with a hair-pin. Not content with piercing the tongue of the Precursor with a golden bodkin,[3] Herodias would also, perhaps, have staved in his eyes; and she struck him, on the forehead, a blow violent enough to leave its trace after eighteen centuries.[4] Useless sacrilege! The sightless eyes pursued her with their threatening glance, and through the palace echoed the merciless words: "*Non licet!* It is not lawful!"[5]

[1] This dish is preserved at Genoa (V. Lettres d'un pèlerin, t. 1., p. 127).

[2] Mark, VI, 28.

[3] S. Hieron, *In Rufin.*, III, 11

[4] As may be seen on the relic preserved in the Cathedral at Amiens.

[5] The arabic tradition, verified by the *Koran*, would imply even that the lips of the illustrious dead opened, before Herod and his accomplice to cry out again: "Non licet."

The disciples of John took his mortal remains, and in secret rendered him the last tribute of respect.[1] About this time, Jesus said to the apostles, — in reply to the question: "Why then do the Scribes say that Elias must come first?" — "Elias indeed shall come and restore all things. But I say to you that Elias is already come; and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they had a mind. So also the Son of Man shall suffer from them."[2]

And when the disciples of the Precursor came, bringing the news of his death, the apostles understood that Jesus had spoken of him.[3] Besides, it was not the first time that the names of Elias and the Baptist had been united on the Saviour's lips. At the close of His interview with the deputies from Machærus, He had already said, in speaking of the illustrious captive: "He is Elias that is to come."[4] Not that He gave him the personality of Elias, as is supposed by the uninitiated, but because there was in him the spirit and power of the prophet, as Gabriel had foretold to Zachary.[5]

There dwelt also in the soul of John the humble affection so suddenly developed at their first meet-

[1] Matth., XIV, 12. — According to Nicephorus, *Hist.*, lib. 1, c. 9, the relics of St. John were taken to Sebaste, but the head remained some time at Machærus, from whence it was taken by Herodias to Jerusalem. It was found, at the time of Constantine, in the ruins of the Asmonean palace. — (Sozomenus, *Hist. eccles.*, lib. VII, c. 21.)

[2] Matth., XVII, 10–12; — Mark, IX, 10–12.

[3] Matth., XIV, 12; — XVII, 13.

[4] Matth., XI, 14: "Ipse est Elias qui venturus est."

[5] Luke, I, 17: "In spiritu et virtute Eliae."

ing, as in the morning a flower opens its petals under the feet of the traveller. It was not the tie of kinship that drew them together, but the revelation of their souls and of their destinies united them in an embrace, in which respect and love contended for the mastery, as in the meeting between Elizabeth and Mary. The son and the mother seem to have been agreed as to the form of salutation on the approach of their divine Friend. — "And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" said Elizabeth. — "I ought to be baptised by thee; and comest thou to me?" said John the Baptist. They both felt themselves prophetically enlightened by love, and thereby rendered Him the greater homage. — "Since He is come," concluded the Precursor, "I have nothing to do but disappear, for He must increase, but I must decrease."[1] — To which the Master replied: "There hath not risen among them that are born of women a greater than John the Baptist!"[2] The commendation is beyond all conception, and yet Saint Brigitt has gathered from the lips of Jesus-Christ a praise that is rarer still: "John is my friend!"[3] — And was not this his rightful title, since he had given the proof, *par excellence*, of his love — "to lay down his life for his friend"?[4]

[1] John, III, 30: "Illum oportet crescere, me autem minui."

[2] Matth., XI, 11: "Non surrexit inter natos mulierum major Joanne Baptista." — Cf. Luke, VII, 28.

[3] S. Brigitt. Revelat., lib. VI.

[4] John, XV, 13: "Majorem hac dilectionem nemo habet ut animam suam ponat quis pro amicis suis."

On the confines of the Old Testament, the figure of the Baptist stands forth like one of those majestic columns in the east that survive the surrounding ruin. In the deep azure and brilliant light, the monolith assumes gigantic proportions; in the distance it seems to unite heaven and earth, and one expects to see above, resting on its pinnacle, the God of Jacob, smiling at the turmoil among the human dust that the wind stirs at its base. When night comes, the feet of the colossus are steeped in gloom, the stars trace their glittering circles round its head, as diamonds set in a tiara, and the mind instinctively begins to muse on the star-crowned chief to whom the Master addressed, in the presence of His angels, the salutation gathered from his lips by Brigitt: "This is John the Baptist, My Precursor and My Friend!"

Chapter VI.

The Fatherland of Jesus-Christ.

> And coming into His own country, he taught them.
>
> Matth., XIII, 54.

Patriotism is a part of the emotional life, and it would be to us a matter of surprise, if the love of His country had no place in the heart of Jesus-Christ. However, coming upon earth to effect unity among all men, and to substitute for their restricted notions of nationality, the idea — vast as the world and time — of a humanity which considered neither Jews nor Gentiles, Greeks nor barbarians,[1] — He seems to some minds not to have confined His love within the limits laid down by Jewish patriotism, in the first century of our era. Here we have a confusion of ideas easy to dissipate, if we would but distinguish between the personality and the mission of Jesus-Christ. By His personality, He was a citizen of a certain country, having sentiments and duties which He had no wish to disavow, since He recognised His obligation to fulfil all justice.[2] His mission made Him, beyond any doubt, the man of all time, of all races, of all countries, — but only under the aspect of His vocation to the supernatural life, or the kingdom

[1] Coloss., III, 11: "Ubi non est gentilis et Judæus, etc." — Cf. Rom., I, 14.

[2] Matth., III, 15: "Decet nos implere *omnem justitiam*."

of God in souls, to which neither the thought, nor the love of country are opposed, in those who accept the Gospel.[1] On the contrary, it is the best guarantee of right principles and honourable practices, — as well as the best safeguard against error and superstition. The apostle, resembling his divine Master, in the zeal with which he embraces all souls, is none the less the loving and devoted son of his country, and his preaching, far from wounding the national sentiment of the people to whom he is sent, renders it more lively and effectual, while rectifying its prejudices and moderating its ardour.[2]

Experience teaches us that the saints, the most perfect disciples of the Gospel, have been the most ardent and devoted of patriots, and at the same time the most indefatigable champions of Christian ideas. There is, then, no real opposition between the doctrine of catholic unity and patriotism, even in the most restricted sense of the word; that is to say, with reference only to the love which every man can, and ought to feel for the place of his birth, and for the companions of his daily toil.

Nor is there anything offensive in the exclusiveness which characterises some of the Master's words, — for instance, when He says to the Apostles: "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into the cities of the Samaritans enter not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of

[1] Lacordaire, *Disc. sur la vocation de la nation française.*

[2] Nothing is more curious than modern theories on this subject. (Cf. in particular Tolstoï: *l'Esprit chrétien et le patriotisme.*)

Israel."[1] — And again, when He speaks of Himself, "I was not sent but to the sheep that are lost of the house of Israel,"[2] which seems effectually to exclude even the most willing souls among the Gentiles, to restrict His ministry to His own nation, although the Apostles themselves had interceded in favour of foreigners. One feels that this exclusiveness was the result of the esteem in which He held the privileged people, *from whom salvation should go forth*, to Samaria and the rest of the world,[3] — that He should, consequently, serve them first, to make of their glory a light to the revelation of the Gentiles.[4]

In that, Jesus seems to have been of the same mind as His compatriots, in whose eyes the land of Israel was *holy*, and whose people were the *chosen of God* for the bestowal of blessings which would benefit the world through their agency. Had we discovered but this one characteristic, His life would seem to us in perfect harmony with all we know of His surroundings and of His time.

Never was a country so loved as this corner of the earth, so despised by the chosen spirits of Greece and Rome,[5] after having been so cruelly

[1] Matth., X, 5–6: "In viam gentium ne abieritis et in civitates Samaritanorum ne intraveritis, sed potius ad oves quae perierunt domus Israël."

[2] Matth., XV, 24: "Non sum missus nisi ad oves quae perierunt domus Israël."

[3] John, IV, 22: "Quia salus ex Judæis est."

[4] Luke, II, 32: "Lumen ad revelationem gentium et gloriam plebis tuae Israël."

[5] Cf. Cicero, Tacitus, etc.

trampled upon by the invasions of Egypt and Assyria. The Bible is, properly speaking, but a patriotic hymn, in which tender strains blend with enthusiastic chants, and cries of sorrow. The Jewish people, alone, among the ancients, have given a soul to their country. Israel and Sion are to them living, tangible beings, whose heart throbs beneath the touch, whose voice strikes upon the ear, who rejoice and weep, who sink in death and rise again, as a strong man or a tender virgin, in the reality of their actual or future life. Before settling in the Promised Land, the sons of Abraham aspired thereto with a desire that nothing weakened; the riches of Egypt, placed at their disposal by Joseph and the Pharaos, did not change their intention; the sufferings of the march through the desert did not destroy their hopes; the divisions which separated the tribes, did not weaken the love they bore it; their wanderings were prolonged, but these did not efface its image; the conquests which enslaved it from Alexander to Pompey, and the tyrannies which were the outcome of these conquests, only resulted in rendering it dearer and more sacred in the eyes of all. The brightness of happy days, and the shadow of bad ones made it also appear cheerful in their sunshine, and sad in their gloom. Athens and Rome had been deified, but their images had no real life, even to their most fanatical adorers. Sion never usurped the glory of the one God, and in return it received from Him, and communicated to the country which it personified, a personal life, full of strength,

grace, and expansion. For it, heroism, poetry, and piety worked wonders, which one feels to have been the outcome of love. The royal bride of the *Canticles*[1] did not receive greater praise, was not more celebrated in song, nor adorned and crowned with more surpassing beauty, than the *Virgin daughter of Sion*,[2] the beloved of Jehovah! — Many centuries before the Trouveres and knights of France, the sons of Israel had invented for this other "lady-love" a whole language at once sweet and forcible, which has no equal in all antiquity.[3]

Did we not fear to weary the reader, what beautiful examples might we not borrow from the *Psalms* of David, the *Canticles* of Solomon, the *Prophecies* of Isaias, the *Lamentations* of Jeremiah, and the two books of the Machabees, to show to what poetic enthusiasm this language lends itself, so different from that which the most celebrated of the Greek or Latin poets speak! But we must pass on, regretting, like the lover of the Sulamite, not to be able to reveal *their hidden charm*.[4]

And, let not this flow of poetry be attributed to of eastern imagination! We should seek vainly for anything resembling it among the remains of

[1] Cantic., IV, 8: "Veni de Libano, sponsa mea . . . coronaberis . . ." etc.

[2] IV Reg., XIX, 21, and Isaias, XXXVII, 22: "Virgo, filia Sion." — Jerem., XIV, 17: "Virgo, filia populi mei," — and XVIII, 13: "Virgo Israël." — Thren., I, 15: "Virgini filiæ Juda."

[3] See especially the *Psalms* and the *Prophecies*.

[4] Cantic., IV, 1: "Absque eo quod intrinsecus latet."

Asiatic literature, from the primitive to the most recent. One might sing elsewhere than on the banks of the Jordan and in the shadow of Thabor, of limpid streams and sunny skies, of undulating hills and mountains towering into eternal silence: one might boast elsewhere than on the shores of Genezareth and the plains of Saron, of the perfume of the vines, the brilliancy of the roses, the freshness of the verdure, the richness of the harvests: one might celebrate elsewhere than at the gates of Jerusalem and in the courts of the Temple, the holiness of priests, the splendour of kings, the valour of warriors, the beauty of virgins, the virtue of wives and mothers — but nowhere does one find this dominating accent of love and veneration for country. Patriotism is, so to speak, the foundation of the Jewish soul, and we might place upon the lips of the ancient Israelites the words of the modern poet: "Jerusalem, thou art the object of all my thoughts, of all my aspirations, of all my actions, of all my songs. . . Thou art the rose expanding to the morning light, . . . the bird that sings in the deepening twilight, . . . the palm which refreshes the pilgrim, the oasis whence springs the living water to slake the weary traveller's thirst, . . . the rainbow of peace, the dove that bears the green branch of hope. . ."[1]

To consider Jesus-Christ, however, merely as a Jew of the first century, we must believe Him to have been animated with the sentiments of His contemporaries, as He had received the same

[1] Louis Wihl, *West-östlich Schvalben.*

education, that is to say, submitted to the same influences, which produced, naturally, the same effects. But in considering His superior personality, — His mission to bring about uniformity in beliefs and morals, with the concurrence of His own race (according to the word spoken to the Samaritan woman, that "the salvation of the world should come from the Jews"), we are led to attribute to Him quite another esteem and love for His country and His people. Hereditary patriotism gained in Him all that an actual interest could add to it, even though other circumstances did not yet explain its development.

In nations that are preserved from despondency by solid convictions, misfortune has the effect of rousing and stimulating patriotism. Attempts at reaction against tyranny, or efforts for the expulsion of the stranger, but directly result in frustrating the desired end. There remains, however, a new impulse given to ideas of liberty and independence, — a growing impatience of the yoke, and a more active pursuit of the means to shake it off. Country is a mother, loved all the more when she is unhappy; every hour of mourning renders her more venerable and more worthy of being served, even with the last drop of our blood. Galilee groaned under the tyranny of the Herods and their Roman protectors; the zealots incessantly fomented resistance, and exposed themselves occasionally to most dangerous adventures. Should not Jesus have felt the reaction of these agitations, and should He not have experienced an increase of sympathy with the

humiliations and sorrows of His country? Consequently, before studying His mental dispositions, we should pay Him the honour of a real and living patriotism, like all true sons of Israel.

The first object of this love, the country itself, presented various aspects throughout Palestine, according to the different latitudes. In the south, Judea, rocky, burnt, and arid, except on the shores of the Mediterranean, the borders of the Jordan, and some parts near the Dead Sea. In the north, Galilee, smiling and fertile, with grassy plains, verdant mountains, and its beautiful lake, abounding in fish. Between the two, Samaria, which shared the characteristics of both, was not so barren as Judea, but less charming than Galilee.

Judea still retains the characters which formerly distinguished it, or rather it accentuates them, now that human effort does not thwart nature. The table-lands, bare now, were formerly wooded; along the slopes, loose stone terraces guard the earth which the rains swept away; the waters, carefully regulated, irrigate the gloomy solitudes, and the vigilance of the shepherds protects the bush and shrubs scattered along the sides of the hills and by the torrents, from the destructive herds. However, this was always a rough, obstinate land, a surly and uneven soil, placed by the difficulty of its access beyond the reach of commerce, and skirted only by the route which ran along the coast from Egypt to Syria. But there was a wonderful compensation for "this austere barrenness" . . . which gives to Judea its own

peculiar feature, and accords so well with the character of its people. . . In the rocky pasture lands of Judea, on the summits of its mountains, the country has no beauty save its grandeur; it elevates the poet's thought, without interesting the eyes of the artist: the absence of details, the uniformity of colour, hinders the pleasures of sight; the eye instinctively wanders to the grand celestial horizons where nothing impedes the view, towards the veil of light, behind which the Lord conceals the rays of His glory.[1]

Galilee was quite otherwise. If we may be pardoned, we shall borrow its description from an impious pen, but one faithful in this picture. — "The saddest country in the world," says Renan, "is, perhaps, the neighbourhood of Jerusalem. Galilee, on the contrary, is a country, green, shady, and delightful — the true country of the Canticle of Canticles and the songs of the beloved.[2] During the months of March and April the fields are clothed with flowers of incomparable beauty and colour, and in no other country in the world do the mountains rise in more harmonious elevation or inspire nobler thoughts. This beautiful land, in our own day so gloomy, so sad, because of the great poverty that Islamism has brought to human life, but where all that man has not been able to destroy still breathes profusion, sweetness, and

[1] Bovet, *Voyage en Terre Sainte*, p. 320–321.

[2] According to Ewald, the Canticle must have been composed in the country of Ephraim, on the confines of Galilee.

tenderness — superabounded at the time of Jesus in comforts and joy."[1]

The horrible state to which Galilee is reduced, especially around the lake of Tiberias, should not deceive us. This country, now burnt up, was once a terrestial paradise. The baths of Tiberias, in our day a frightful abode, were formerly the most beautiful spot in Judea. Josephus extols the fine trees of the plain of Genezareth,[2] but not one of them remains. Antoninus the martyr,[3] about 600, fifty years before the Mussulman invasion, found Galilee still covered with delightful plantations, and compares its fertility to that of Egypt.[4] The lake, incessantly animated by the fishermen's boats, produced on its shores the most abundant vegetation, and gathered together, at least on the western bank, what was not seen elsewhere, trees of all species — the walnut, for instance, beside the palm, not to speak of the fruit trees, the olive, the fig, the vine, all luxuriantly productive.[5]

The Talmud happily summarises these pictures in a few words: "The country of Naphtali is everywhere covered with fertile fields and with vines; the fruits of this country are celebrated for their extreme sweetness and delicacy."[6] Such was this land in which the Scripture says that

[1] Renan, *Vie de Jésus*, p. 64–66.

[2] Josephus, Antiq. Jud., XVIII, II, 3, and Bell. Jud., III, X, 8.

[3] Itiner., § 5.

[4] Renan, op. cit., p. 64.

[5] Stapfer, *La Palestine*, p. 42.

[6] Dissertation *Berakthoh*, 44 a.

milk and honey flowed,[1] and whose regions it glorifies, when peace gave to its inhabitants the joy of *resting in complete confidence under* the shade of their vines and fig-trees.[2]

The child of Israel had, however, seen other countries, — Egypt, where he had inhabited the land of Gessen, — Assyria, where he had admired the hanging gardens, — Asiatic Greece, so rich in all the products of nature, but nothing compensated him for Palestine. The Jordan came to his thoughts on the Nile, the Euphrates, and the Orontes; Mount Hermon, on Olympia and Taurus; the great ocean itself but reminded him of the Sea of Galilee. He had seen them as an exile, admired them, no doubt, then forgot them on his return: the Holy Land alone possessed the power to move and affect him. All the rest was the strange land[3], the *land of exile* and *malediction*,[4] which he must abandon in haste to re-enter the country of the children of God.

The men of Israel were as different to each other as its provinces. In Judea, composed of the tribes of Juda and Benjamin, especially in the environs of Jerusalem and in the city itself, built on the confines of the two tribes, lived "a people,

[1] Exod., XIII, 5: "Terram fluentem lacte et melle." — Cf. Levit., Num. I, Deuter., Joshua, etc.

[2] III. Reg., IV, '25: 'Habitabatque Juda et Israël, absque timore ullo, unusquisque sub vite sua et sub ficu sua, a Dan usque Bersabee."

[3] Joshua, IX, 6: "Terra longinqua." — Exod., II, 22: "Advena fui in terra aliena."

[4] Genes., V, 29: "Terra cui maledixit Dominus."

attached to their traditions, wishing to know only the letter of the Law," among whom "the ancient faith petrified,"[1] — who opposing at once error from without and progress from within, paid to routine and prejudice as much respect as they yielded obedience. Pharisaism flourished there, aiding Sadduceism to live, as absolutism fosters the life of doubt and incredulity. But we must not forget that the history of Judea is made up of Deborah and Samuel, Saul, David and his race, Isaias, Jeremiah, Daniel, Onias, the Machabees, the great inspirers of the pharisaical school, Hillel and Schammai. Hebron, the city of Abraham, was situated in Judea, — Bethlehem, the city of David, — Bethel, the first house of God on earth, — Jerusalem, with its Temple, the greatest in the world, which sheltered the Ark and the tables of the Law. The Jews were the consecrated people, *par excellence*, and no one dreamt of disputing the supremacy of which they were so proud, and for which they had shed their blood in defence of religion and country. Obdurate and haughty, poor, but living on little, they commanded respect, even while they provoked dissatisfaction and antipathy. The first century, which saw their ruin, marvelled at their fanaticism, admired their courage, and deemed them worthy of a better cause and of a happier destiny. The people of Galilee had quite different characteristics. Although the Israelite element prevailed there, it was by no means rare to find among the Galileans those of

[1] Stapfer, *La Palestine*, p. 117.

Phœnician, Greek, Arabic, or Syrian origin. In general, the inhabitants of the north of Palestine were of a gentle and peaceful disposition, of simple manners, intelligent, hard-working, and hospitable, — more *solicitous for honour than wealth.* Such, at least, Josephus and the Talmud represent them, though these were anything but prejudiced in their favour.[1] The citizens of Jerusalem sneered at their native simplicity,[2] their ignorance of the sacred Scripture, their defective pronunciation,[3] the little hope they had of giving a liberator to their country[4] (notwithstanding Barac, Gedeon, Jephte, Samson, and Judith, who were purposely forgotten). Their courage, however, was not inferior to that of the Jews, in that unfortunate campaign against the Romans, which began on the borders of the lake of Tiberias, and ended on those of the Dead Sea. But, in the eyes of the Judean Puritans, they laboured under the great disadvantage of living close to the Gentiles, having constant relations with them, admitting them as freely to the heart of their country, as the officials of Rome, the merchants of Greece, and the partisans of the Herods.

However, although the Judeans and they had little love for each other, they did not feel towards one another anything resembling hatred. They were too close neighbours not to have their mutual

[1] Cf. Josephus, *Antiq. Jud.*, and *Bell. Jud.*, passim; — Talmud, *Babyl.*, (*Medarin* and *Tosiftah Peah*); — Talm., *Jerus.* (*Kethouboth*).

[2] Talm., *Babyl.*, *Erubin*, 53 b.

[3] Matth., XXVI, 73.

[4] John, VII, 52; — I, 46–47.

jealousy aroused, but their rivalry was always on matters of detail, and in all great religious and patriotic questions they were strongly united.[1] — We see this clearly when, at the siege of Jerusalem, Titus was opposed by these two Galileans, John of Giscala and Simon Bar-Gioras, who would be heros were they not bandits, but who pushed the tenacity of their resistance even to the very last limits. Josephus has not done them sufficient justice[2]. The Cæsars thought otherwise when they compelled Simon to follow their triumphal chariot before delivering him up to the axe of the lictor.

Jews and Galileans were also united in the same detestation of the stranger, were he Greek or Barbarian, Samaritan or Gentile. The many necessities entailed by Greek or Roman occupation, the neighbourhood of the Phœnicians, the ever varying political alliances, the commercial relations with the entire world, were never prejudicial to this union, and at the time of Jesus Christ the Herodians were too few in number and of too little importance, to modify it in anything. To be as a heathen and a publican[3] was synonymous with being outside the fraternal law, which bound together the children of promise[4] and the sharers in the friendship of God.[5] Their whole education was inspired by this principle or tended to

[1] Stapfer, *La Palestine*, p. 119.

[2] *Bell. Jud.*, passim.

[3] Matth., XVIII, 17: "Sit tibi sicut ethnicus et publicanus."

[4] Rom., IX, 8: "Filii promissionis."

[5] Sap., VII, 14: "Participes facti sunt amicitiae Dei."

this end — total and complete separation from strangers.

Respect for the Law and for historic remains, which composed the third element of Jewish patriotism, could not, in fact, have other motive or result. The belief in the unity of God, in divine Providence, in the immortality of the soul, in the resurrection of the body, in an eternity of punishment and recompense, in the inviolability of human life, in the sanctity of the marriage tie, in respect for the property of others, set the Jews absolutely apart from other peoples.[1] Among themselves, these doctrines had nothing personal, vague, or changeable; they constituted a dogmatic and moral summary, of divine origin, of clear and unalterable form, as well as of unquestionable authority over all souls and lives. Unlike other peoples, sceptics and libertines were among them a weak minority, who did not succeed in raising either the intelligence or the fortune of the Sadducees or of the Herodians, in public esteem. Even the particular calling with which they had been honoured in the person of Abraham, which God had renewed in Isaac and Jacob, only explained their history, with its alternations of glory, humiliation, and regeneration, in which everything not only distinguished them from other men, but placed them, as it were, in constant opposition. Unless, then, he abandoned all, — convictions, remembrances,

[1] In spite of all sophistry, anyone who can read the Bible and the Talmud will recognise these doctrines in them very clearly.

hopes, — the Jew must regard himself as degraded, contaminated even, by communication with infidels, and in conformity with the logic of independent minds and systems, he came to detest those whom he ought to have been content to pity, and continued to despise them after they had become proselytes. Such, unquestionably, were the Pharisees; such, also, were others, having these characteristics more or less pronounced, as one still sees in Islam with regard to Giaours and Keffrs,[1] whom they tolerate, though secretly cursing them.

If there were in Israel a child who should appear in duty bound to submit to the influence of traditional teaching and education, it was Jesus, Son of David, the heir apparently stripped of the promises made to His race, the natural representative of its claims before God. Poverty and destitution had no connection, in a son of Israel, with the ignorance and disdain of these memories and hopes. The most abandoned among them was not excluded from the knowledge of the Law and its history, however little he desired it, and the epoch of Jesus is one of those in which this desire was felt by every soul. The Man-God did not require to study, since He possessed all knowledge, and it is on these considerations that the Gospel affirms of Jesus that He had — at the age of twelve years — a knowledge and science of the Law and of the Prophets, capable of astonishing the doctors.[2] — When He entered public life, He gave too many

[1] "Infidels", in the various moslem dialects.

[2] Luke, II, 46-47.

striking proofs of this, to allow even the slightest doubt. He had, then, full light on this subject as on every other, and, preserved against all exaggeration of the national spirit, He was profoundly imbued with this spirit itself; so that, did the Gospel teach us nothing special, we should still be able to affirm the superior patriotism of the divine Master. But the Gospel renders such charming and persuasive testimony of it, that we cannot withhold our absolute assent.

The word "country" is used by the Evangelist solely with regard to Nazareth, called so by Jesus-Christ Himself,[1] to the prejudice, it would seem, of Bethlehem, where He was born. In truth, the city of David, by the accidental fact of His birth, was not the country of Jesus, who had been brought to Nazareth in His infancy; had been reared and dwelt there till of an age when He could choose for Himself, and continued to return there during the course of His apostolic life, until the jealousy of His fellow-citizens obliged Him to retire to Capharnaum.[2] The Evangelists employ the current language by which we understand *country* to be the place of primordial and ordinary sojourn of the man of whom we speak. However, there has resulted from this acceptation of the term a curious interpretation of the texts of Saint Matthew and Saint Luke, relating to the birth of Jesus; we give it here for the reader's perusal, and also to convey an idea of the manner in which a certain criticism interprets the sacred writings.

[1] Matth., XIII, 57; — John, IV, 44.

[2] Luke, IV, 28–31.

Near Nazareth was situated a hamlet that Joshua[1] and the Talmud called Bethlehem,[2] — Gerieh, or Nitseriah, that is, in the neighbourhood of Nazareth. Whence this conclusion: "One cannot forbear from asking if Jesus, called by the Gospel "the Nazarean", might not have been born precisely in this hamlet, near Nazareth. Later on, this place of birth might have been confounded with Bethlehem–Ephrata of Judea, the cradle of the family of David, and where, according to tradition, the Messiah should be born,"[3]

"We ask the question without solving it," adds the writer responsible for this phantasy, which Strauss and Renan appear to have ignored or scorned, although they give Nazareth, not Bethlehem, as the birthplace of Jesus. The author of *La Palestine* would have been able to reply at once, that Saint Matthew says the Saviour was born in Bethlehem *of Juda*,[4] that is, in Bethlehem of Judea, near Jerusalem, and not at Nazareth; that the same Evangelist represents the Magi as having been sent by the scribes of Jerusalem to Bethlehem *of Juda*, — fulfilling the prophecy of Micheas who specified Bethlehem–*Ephrata*,[5] and which he calls "Bethlehem, the *land of Juda*,"[6] —

[1] Joshua, XIX, 15. — Cf. Judges, XII, 8.

[2] Now *Bethlahm*, 6 miles west of Nazareth. (V. Neubauer, *Géographie du Talmud*, p. 189–190.)

[3] Stapfer, *La Palestine*, p. 43, note 3.

[4] Matt., II, 1: "Cum ergo natus esset Jesus Bethleem *Juda*."

[5] Mich., V, 2: "Et tu, Bethleem Ephrata, parvulus es in millibus *Juda*."

[6] Matth., II, 6: "Et tu, Bethleem, terra *Juda*."

agreeing with the prophet. He might also have noticed the expressions of Saint Luke, who leaves no room for any doubt, "And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; because he was of the house and family of David."[1] We should but waste time if we delayed longer over this question which the protestant, rationalistic writer "asks without solving," and which it were better not to have asked at all. — If Nazareth is called "the country" of Jesus, in the sense in which we ourselves employ this word to designate a French province or city, the "land of Israel" is the true country to which the angel brought Mary and her divine Child after the exile of Egypt,[2] and it is of it that we must speak, with the Gospel.

A leading feature in the preachings of Jesus, one easy to note, is its absolutely national character. Not only does He speak the syro-chaldaic language, to the exclusion of all other idioms used in Palestine, but the form of thought and turn of expression are essentially Jewish. The images, the comparisons, the contrasts, the allusions, do not appear to have been borrowed from nature, history, doctrines, or manners other than Jewish. Just as the Gospel is an oriental book, of which there is no doubt, it is also Palestinian and Jewish, in spite of more or less scientific imaginations

[1] Luke, II, 4: "A Galilæa, de civitate Nazareth, in Judæam, in civitatem . . . quae vocatur Bethleem."

[2] Matth., II, 20: "Surge . . . et vade in terram Israël."

which our age sometimes honours by taking seriously. Jesus had, we know, visited Decapolis and Phœnicia[1]; He had seen other centres, other men, other customs, but nevertheless, no trace of them is found in His mode of thought or speech. He has no rules of life but the laws of His country[1]; He appears not to have known any language but that of His own land[3]; His visible affections are marked, like those of Judas Machabeus, by an inviolable attachment to the laws, to the Temple, to the holy city, to the people of Israel.[4] This exclusively patriotic characteristic is found even in those of His actions apparently most opposed to this sentiment. He affects at first not to welcome, with His ordinary kindness, the poor Phœnician woman who begged Him to cure her sick child[5]; and He, who eagerly attended the bedside of the sick or the dead, to bring them health or resurrection, healed at a distance the servant of the Roman centurion of Capharnaum.[6] He admired and commended the faith of the gentile, but He would not enter his house.[7] Levi and Zachary, both publicans, were still of the blood of Abraham, and He sat at their table. Their house did not contaminate the presence it sheltered, but that of the centurion

[1] Matth., XV, 21; — Mark, V, 20, and VII, 24.

[2] II Macch., VII, 24: "Patriis legibus."

[3] *Id.*, XII, 37: "Voce patria."

[4] *Id.*, XIII, 14: "Pro legibus, templo, civitate, patria et civibus."

[5] Matth., XV, 22–28.

[6] Matth., VIII, 5–14.

[7] Luke, VII, 2–11.

would have cast, in the eyes of the multitude, the shadow of pagan and domineering Rome on the soul of the patriot and believer.

This patriotic pride could not, however, but compromise the true interests of Israel, by its excesses of words and action. Though He took pleasure in the title, "Son of David",[1] and willingly called to mind the recollection of Solomon[2], He could not allow Himself to take a false view of these great memories. In the midst of the turmoil which disturbed Galilee, and the ebulition of passions which agitated even His own family, He remained opposed to all rash demands, not from indolence or fear of failure, but because He would not have His country risk the adventures in which Jerusalem, the Temple, and liberty were afterwards destined to perish.

What strikes us most when He gave permission to pay the tribute to Cæsar,[3] and refused the crown which the multitude offered Him in the desert,[4] is His patriotism, not His prudence and disinterestedness. The Son of kings, the heir of prophetic promises, surrounded by all the prestige that eloquence, power, and popularity could give — inspired, it would seem, to place Himself above all others, by the hatred of His opponents as much as by the esteem of His partisans, — has only one reply to all their solicitations, in the mysterious

[1] Matth., IX, 27; — Mark, X, 47; — Luke, XVIII, 38, etc.
[2] Matth., VI, 29, and XII, 42; — Luke, XI, 31, and XII, 27.
[3] Matth., XXII, 16-21; — Mark, XII, 14-17.
[4] John, VI, 14-15.

words: "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a redemption for many."[1]

"To minister" is the word of a patriot, as "to be ministered unto" is the word of the ambitious. But to minister is not to flatter; the object of the flatterer is to please, not to be useful, since it is often necessary to displease, in order to serve. We also find in Jesus-Christ an unparalled anxiety for truth and goodness, in everything and everywhere, even in doing violence to the sympathies which were His by right, and the personal interests which He could most lawfully defend. He loved Galilee with a preference which is seen in His eagerness to return there after His journeys to Judea, — in the tenderness, so to speak, of His words when it brings before His mind the pictures that are the theme of His parabolical teachings, — in His gracious working of the miracles of Cana, Capharnaum, and Naim. Galilee is the place of the apostle's vocation, Magdalen's conversion, the Transfiguration on Thabor, and the promise of the Eucharist. But we find nowhere in the Gospel that He espoused the quarrels of the Galileans, so frequent in His time, and sometimes ending so sadly.[2] Judea could not claim His love, for many reasons, and the foreknowledge that, after having been so

[1] Matth., XX, 28: "Filius hominis non venit ministrari sed ministrare et dare animam suam redemptionem pro multis."

[2] Luke, XIII, 1-2.

cruelly misunderstood, He should be put to death there, rendered, no doubt, even the thought of any sojourn in it, unwelcome. However, there is not one single painful word in the Gospel for the inhabitants of Juda or Jerusalem; the part which is assigned them is sufficiently beautiful to prevent their jealousy, and the stern words addressed to their instigators, pharisees, scribes, or priests, are not spared on the zealous hypocrits of the law in Galilee. The curse which menaced the Galilean towns of Corozain, Bethsaida, and Capharnaum[1], did not fall on Jerusalem, the object of His sad presentiments and the cause of His tears, but ever dear to His heart.[2] Nothing proves more conclusively the absence of all personal consideration than this clemency and impartiality. Beyond all that man can experience or fear, there is our Country — a mother who, we must never forget, has given us life, and who has a right to the assistance of her children.

Love does not always prevent the giving of advice, warning, or reprimand, when the salvation of those whom we would serve requires it. But salvation cannot come except by truth and justice[3]: to proclaim it is, then, a duty for those whose mission it is to raise the people, or arrest them on the brink of ruin. The prophet Isaias had received

[1] Matth., XI, 21–23.

[2] Matth., XXIII, 37; — Luke, XIII, 34, and XIX, 41–45.

[3] John, VIII, 32: "Veritas liberabit vos." — Prov., X, 2: "Justitia vero liberavit a morte," etc.

that command,[1] and transmitted it to those who were to come after him; Jesus could not be unfaithful, and His voice was raised without fear and without truce,[2] as was that of John the Baptist, to promote in all souls zeal for the kingdom of God. But the truth often offends, and justice is always oppressive: in proclaiming them one runs the risk of being disagreeable to the great and unpopular with the multitude, — as a consequence of not promoting one's own interests, but rather of making irreconcilable enemies and exposing oneself in advance to every kind of deception; — considerations which restrain the ambitious or satisfy them, but to which the patriot does not stoop, for he regards only wisdom and prudence[3] as being calculated to render his intervention profitable, after which, having done all that depends on him, he leaves the rest to God. In the true patriot there is an apostle and a martyr: he who fears to appear, or draws back before the complete sacrifice of himself, understands nothing of patriotism. After the example of Jesus, *he must have neither family nor friendships, nor goods that he is not ready to abandon*, to go where duty calls[4]: this is *the only means of becoming worthy of Him*, profoundly disregardful of those who *look back after having put their hands to the plough.*[5]

[1] Isaias, XL, 9: "Lift up thy voice with strength . . . lift it up, fear not."

[2] Isaias, LVIII, 1: "Clama, ne cesses."

[3] II Tim., IV, 2: "In omni patientia et doctrina."

[4] Matth., X, 37; — Luke, XIV, 26.

[5] Luke, IX, 62: "Nemo mittens manum suam ad aratrum et respiciens retro, aptus est regno Dei."

The Saviour of Israel did not look back, and His work ended only at the moment when His heart ceased to beat. Expiatory Victim for this people, who would not have Him for their king in time,[1] He opened for them, by His death, the gates of the eternal kingdom, where their place and part are still the first,[2] since it is necessary to be the regenerated of Israel to enter into the heavenly Jerusalem, and to rest in the bosom of the true Abraham.[3] Let not the patriotism of Christ be called in question, in order to have the right to calumniate that of His children. Let us say with Lacordaire that "our country is the Church of time, as the Church is our country for eternity." For us, taking the simple human view, "without country, man is an atom lost among the accidents of time and space. . . . Our country and our Church; the national and the religious feeling, far from excluding one another, are strengthened one by the other. . . God has made our country; it is He who made the Church; it is He also who made the love which both demand from us." — And we add, with the same great orator: "There, where our country is an empty temple which expects nothing from us but silence and taxes, it creates all around it a formidable sloth, and a powerful depravity. The strength of souls, if such is left

[1] Luke, XIX, 14: "Nolumus hunc regnare super nos."

[2] Rom., II, 10: "But glory and honour and peace to every one that worketh good; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."

[3] Galat., VI, 16; — Apoc., XXI, 10-27; — Luke, XVI, 23.

them, is expended to their disgrace. Empty heads bear the burden of great trusts, and weary hearts sigh after dignities that are like themselves. An exchange is made between the corruption of the subjects and the corruption of their masters. These latter, having nothing more to fear, because all is permitted to them, give an impulse to the ruin of morals, and all go, by unanimous consent, to the place where Providence awaits peoples unworthy to live."[1]

[1] Lacordaire, VI. *Conférence de Toulouse.*

SECOND BOOK.

THE CHOSEN FRIENDS.

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THE CHOSEN FRIENDS.

CHAPTER I.

Lazarus.

"Lazarus our friend."
(John, XI, 11.)

Living and profound as was the affection that Jesus bestowed upon His family and His earthly country, we know that these did not absorb all His power of loving: a large part was reserved for other friendships, at once sweeter and stronger, because they were born of the deliberate choice of His heart.

Family affection cannot strictly be called friendship. As Lacordaire so eloquently says, "friendship is born in freer regions. . . It is not the bosom of a mother bent over her sleeping child that gives it birth. . . It issues from the heart of man by an act of supreme freedom, and this freedom perseveres to the very end, though the law of man or the law of God may never consecrate its resolves. Friendship lives by itself and by itself alone: free at its inception, it remains so in its course. It subsists on the intangible adaptability of two souls, a mysterious resemblance between the invisible

beauty of the one and the other, a beauty which the senses may perceive in the emotional expression of the features, but which the effusion of an ever-growing confidence manifests still more clearly, until at length all is light, shadowless and unbounded, and friendship becomes the reciprocal possession of two minds, of two wills, of two faculties, of two lives, always free to separate, yet ever remaining together."[1]

Had the Master during His life any friendships which we may thus define? The mind turns first of all to the disciples and apostles, those souls so intimately connected with the soul of Jesus by that mysterious resemblance of which Père Lacordaire speaks, indissolubly united to the soul of the Saviour in the reciprocal possession of two minds, two wills, two faculties. Yes, these were His friends indeed. They loved Him with a sincere love which He severally returned to all, and which, being greater for His apostles, allowed Him to say to them: "I have called you My friends."[2]

But before speaking of these, we must study another class of freely-bestowed affections in the Master's life, and these alone seem based on freedom in its fullest extent, since the friendship given to the apostles was subject to the law which governed the mission of the Incarnate Word.

"It is manifest in reading the Gospel, that the apostles themselves, chosen though they were and holding the first place in the work of Redemption,

[1] Lacordaire, *Sainte Marie-Madeleine*, c. I.
[2] Id., ibid., III.

were not, however, by the privilege of their future, the most dear to the heart that had called them. For as Jesus, the image of our life, wished to have a mother, so He willed also to have friends who should be His by a title other than their mission, by the right of a loving tenderness independent of any other principle than itself."[1]

The Gospel has preserved for us the names of these friends in a phrase, the brevity of which constitutes its force and charm: "Jesus loved Martha and her sister Mary, and Lazarus!"[2] Certainly, if we consider but the words, they are few; but it is impossible to present the mind with a vaster subject, to provide the heart with keener emotions, or to offer to eloquence and poetry a theme capable of greater development. In these words there is contained the most delightful and impressive history that man can relate, and one which has penetrated most deeply into the memory of generations. Even at the present time, when the traveller who wends his way from Jerusalem, has passed the brook of Cedron and climbed the Mount of Olives, he discerns upon the eastern slope of these hills the ruined fragments of ancient dwellings. Amidst the wreck of centuries three time-worn objects are pointed out to him, scarcely distinguishable among the shapeless remains. "There", he is told, "was the house of Lazarus; there, that of Martha, and there Mary Magdalen's." The treasured remem-

[1] Lacordaire, *Sainte Marie-Madeleine*, c. III.

[2] John, XI, 5: "Diligebat autem Jesus Martham et sororem ejus Mariam et Lazarum."

brances of centuries have outlived the destruction of barbarism, and the names of the friends of Jesus, surviving the scattered stones, still animate with life those silent solitudes.[1] Let us pause among the ruins and revive their memories.

The last named by the Evangelist is Lazarus, not because he was the youngest,[2] but because he occupied a minor place in the life of the divine Friend. That is why we begin our study with him, in order to procure for ourselves, if I may so speak, the delight of progression in which the heart of Jesus will unfold its tenderness to us by degrees. Though less striking, the part that Lazarus played is still worthy of admiration; one could justly say to the Master, without otherwise naming him: "He whom thou lovest!"[3]

After the reduction of Syria to a Roman province by Pompey, in the year 64, the Senate, in accordance with its traditions, had respected civil and religious organisation. The proconsuls who replaced the kings held there the same position as the English residents in India, with somewhat less disinterestedness and honesty, it is true, but with the same apparent spirit of liberality and tolerance. The legates of Augustus continued this system, all the better calculated to allow the vanquished the

[1] Lacordaire, *Sainte Marie-Madeleine*, c. II.

[2] S. Epiphanes (Haeres., 66) makes him thirty years of age at the time of his resurrection; but it is probable that he was younger. Respecting the advanced age attributed by Catherine Emmerich, there is no reason why it should claim our attention.

[3] John, XI, 3: "Domine, ecce quem amas infirmatur."

illusion of an autonomy, as the names themselves denoting authority had not changed. A satrap[1] continued to represent the supreme authority as in the time of Darius, Alexander, or of Antiochus, side by side with the lieutenant and procurators of Caesar: his position was almost ignored, but was not insignificant, as one may judge, even at the present day, by the authority which the chiefs of the Christian communities, subject to the Sultans, exercise. Though not clearly defined, their prerogatives and influence are no less considerable, and the population, somewhat ignorant of the true constitution of the Empire, see in them necessary intermediaries, and the real arbiters of their destiny.

At the beginning of the first century of our era, the chief satrap or magistrate of Phœnician Syria was Theophilus, of noble birth, Greek in name, and a proselyte to Judaism, if indeed he were not of Jewish origin, as was often the case among the dignitaries of Asiatic courts. He had

[1] Viceroy or governor (Rich, *Dictionnaire*, V., *Satrapa*). — S. Jerome translates the hebrew word by *satrape:* pasha? chief or prince. The prerogatives of these officers have changed much since the time of the satraps of whom Quintus Curtius (III, 13), and Cornelius Nepos (Con. c. 2) speak. But their power remained under the Greeks and Romans, with the title of governors or prefects. — Raban Maur, *De vita B. Mariae Magdalenae*, c. I. — We confess, we do not understand the assertion that Martha had another father than Lazarus' and Magdalen's (Theophanes, Homil. XXIV). We believe that the expression "uterine brother and sister" intends to state the relationship precisely, by setting aside the interpretation given to the words in the Gospel — "brothers and sisters of Jesus."

married a daughter of the tribe of Juda and the family of David, named Eucharia or Eucharis, and he had had three children, Martha, Mary, and Eleazar, better known by the Gospel name of Lazarus, the same whom Jesus was one day to call "Our friend".[1] — In their mother's right these children were heirs to lands situated in different parts of Palestine, — Magdala in Galilee, Bethany in Judea,[2] and in Jerusalem itself a dwelling, where there is good reason to suppose they maintained great state when they visited the Holy City.[3] — Although Magdala had fallen to Mary, and Bethany was the chosen abode of Martha, the three children of Theophilus usually lived together, subject to the authority of the elder sister, a gentle and pious virgin, of virile heart and generous hand.

Meanwhile, Mary married, deserted her husband, gave herself up to an abandoned life,[4] and lived for some time in isolation from her brother and sister. Lazarus, at most thirty years of age when John the Baptist began to preach,[5] continued to live with Martha at Bethany, or in their dwelling at Jerusalem, which it is believed was his own

[1] John, XI, 11: "Lazarus amicus noster."

[2] Rabau Maur (op. cit., c. II) speaks of another property in Bethania, *beyond the Jordan where John baptised.* (John, I, 28, and X, 40.)

[3] Rabau Maur, *op. cit.*, c. II: "In omnibus his unanimiter degentes deliciis affluebant."

[4] "Soluto pudicitiae freno," says the *Vie Anonyme*.

[5] According to tradition Magdalen was twenty-five years of age at the time of her conversion. Lazarus, being younger, could have been then only twenty-three or twenty-four. Some believe him to have been even younger.

property.[1] The life of Martha was that of the noble women of Judea, and was occupied with domestic concerns, practices of piety, and intercourse with the doctors and the princes of the people, as we may conclude from the indications given by Scripture and history. The life of Lazarus is little known to us, or rather, it would have escaped us completely if tradition, in other respects precise enough, did not point him out as engaged in a military career,[2] which seems at first difficult to explain.

Military life in Palestine at the time of Lazarus could only assume three forms: the service of the Romans as an auxiliary, the service of Herod, and the service of the Temple. The two latter must be rejected on the most elementary reflection: a son of Juda could not consent to serve Antipas, and the character of the levitical troops would not allow him to join their ranks. The Romans, on the contrary, had auxiliary troops impressed in this very country and joined to the legions of Syria; we know this from Tacitus and other contemporary historians, but nothing authorises us in believing that Lazarus had enlisted in the ranks of this militia.

There remains an explanation which we submit to the judgment of the reader. The custom of bearing arms was general in Galilee, whence Lazarus took his nationality, and besides, the

[1] Tradition says that Magdalen also possessed a house there, confounded, perhaps, with that of Lazarus.

[2] Jacob. A Voragine, *De S. Maria Magdalena.*—"Quod Lazarus militiae vacaret."

eastern nobles were accustomed to appear in public, not only with arms, but even surrounded by an escort of armed men. Although after the downfall of Archelaus Judea had been reduced to a Roman province, and had lost the right to bear arms in ordinary life, the Galileans coming to Jerusalem maintained their privileges as the Arabs still do, who appear in the streets of the City with lances and muskets. Lazarus learnt this military custom from his father, and appeared, very probably, with the traditional arms and escort,[1] the more so as these were not altogether a useless luxury. The Romans kept guard principally over the towns and restricted themselves to providing escorts for their convoys, with the result of assuring the security of all the routes towards the sea on the west and north. But the task of maintaining communication around Jericho and towards Samaria and Tiberias was left to Herod, who still followed the customs of Palestine, leaving each one to protect himself as he best could outside the cities and castles where he quartered his troops. The Gospel teaches us in the parable of the Good Samaritan[2], that there was no trusting to the semblance of security, even on the most frequented roads. — Lazarus must have been called upon on more than one occasion to resist the attacks of vagrants, when he went down to Jericho on his way to Magdala by the valley of the Jordan. If tradition attributes

[1] So James of Voragine supposes, when he speaks of soldiers, militibus, maintained in the house at Bethany. (*De Sancta Maria Magdalena.*)

[2] Luke, X, 30—35.

to him the kind desire of protecting travellers in the mountain passes of Adummim,[1] it seems most probable, at least after Lazarus had become one of the Saviour's disciples.

Hence the Crusaders drew the idea of instituting a religious and military order for the protection of the roads of Palestine and the care of the sick, under the invocation of Saint Lazarus. A singular confusion between the Lazarus of the Parable[2] and the Lazarus of history, or some local belief of which it is impossible to discover the origin, makes the brother of Martha a leper[3] cleansed by Jesus and constituted patron of the leper hospitals of which the order of chivalry founded in 1119,[4] and confirmed in 1255 by Pope Alexander IV. had charge. Perhaps this is how the ancient commentators interpret the "languens" of Saint John[5], by establishing, according to them, a connection between this passage and that in which Jesus and the Lazarus raised from the dead are

[1] *Ma'aleh Adommim* of the Bible, in our own time called *Akbat-er-Riha*, between Jericho and the Khan-el-Atrour. This passage, a regular "break-neck" place, says Fr. Lićvin, is not even now absolutely secure, and travellers cannot traverse it without some anxiety. (Cf. Bovet, *Voy. en Terre Sainte*, etc.) We ourselves have found it more picturesque than reassuring.

[2] Luke, XVI, 20—

[3] "At one league from Jerusalem is (Bethany) . . . and there (Jesus) raised Lazarus from his grave." — *La Citery de Jherusalem*, ap. Vogûé (*Les Églises de Terre Sainte*, p. 448). — Cf. note 1 on the same page.

[4] Still in existence in Italy. (V. *Hist. des Ordres Monastiques*, t. II.)

[5] John, XI, 1. — Cf. Nonnos, *Explicatio Evangelii sec. Joann.* loc. cit.

both found seated at the table of Simon the leper[1], and also, it seems to us, on account of the obscurity in which Lazarus keeps himself in Martha's house, even when the divine Friend wishes to stay there.

However that may be, we know for certain from the Gospel, that Lazarus became at an early date one of the adherents of the new doctrine, and one of the chosen disciples of the Master. But one may be allowed to ask if he did not maintain, in the presence of Jesus, the same reserve as Joseph and Nicodemus, until after his resurrection? The eagerness of the Jews of Jerusalem to console Martha and Mary could hardly be explained, if Lazarus had been an avowed follower of Jesus, and consequently suspected by the Sanhedrin, if not formally excommunicated as had been decreed on the 30th September in the year 33, before the healing of the man born blind.[2] While Catherine Emmerich can claim but little authority in similar matters, we may remark what she says of the celebrated interview of Nicodemus with Jesus,[3] — an interview that she states took place at Bethany, in the house of Lazarus,[4] which we may consider as a sort of neutral ground favourable to such meetings. The part that she assigns to Lazarus entirely coincides with the hypothesis of a discreet

[1] Matth., XXVI, 6: "In domo Simonis leprosi."

[2] John, IX, 22. — Cf., in our work on the Passion, ch. II of Book I.

[3] John, III, 1—21.

[4] *Visions*, t. I, p. 444. — According to her Joseph of Arimethea went there also.

adherence to the doctrine and person of the Messiah. The brother of Martha and Magdalen entertained the idea of a political liberator rather than that of a Messiah who was to build up a spiritual kingdom, — being partially deceived as to the origin, nature, and mission of Jesus, but an admirer of His doctrine and entirely devoted to His person, — constituting himself in some measure a guide, by the knowledge which his position enabled him to procure as to the tone of mind at Jerusalem and the disposition of the great Council or of the Procurator.[1] These are but suppositions, it is true, but they are not absolutely contrary to the belief sanctioned by the Gospel on this subject. We do not see why the Master should not have had some disciples known but to a few, for the purpose of maintaining relations profitable to all, with the wavering or even with His adversaries. Nowhere do we find any blame attaching to Joseph or Nicodemus; on the contrary we have on this point a significant warning from Jesus in response to the impatience of the Apostles: "He that is not against you is for you."[2] The fear of the Jews which restrained Joseph,[3] does not prevent Saint Matthew and Saint Mark from placing him in the rank of the disciples,[4] nor Saint Luke from praising his goodness, his justice, and his independence in

[1] *Visions*, t. I, p. 285; — t. II, p. 347.

[2] Luke, IX, 50: "Qui enim non est adversum vos, pro vobis est."

[3] John, XIX, 38.

[4] Matth., XXVII, 57; — Mark, XV, 43.

presence of the members of the Sanhedrin.[1] Lazarus could, therefore, without incurring censure, remain in the obscurity in which the Gospel seems to keep him purposely till his death and resurrection. He belonged no less to the number of those whom Jesus loved, this at least we have no reason to doubt.

When obliged to fly from the malice of the Jews, the Master had crossed the Jordan and sought refuge among the defiles of Ephraim. He had been there more than six weeks, when a message came to Him from Bethany. The sisters of Lazarus sent word to Him that Lazarus whom He loved was sick.[2] There is not, perhaps, in the entire Gospel, a sweeter or more gracious sentence; it reveals to us the whole heart of Jesus and the whole heart of these two admirable women who typify in the highest degree, the intelligence, the delicacy, and the strength of love.

The malady from which Lazarus suffered was a serious one, and appears to have been of long duration,[3] if we take the expression of Saint John literally, "*Erat languens*, he was languishing.[4]" Nonnus has attempted to specify the disease. According to him it was a low fever caused by ulcers on the legs, which brought on an insupport-

[1] Luke, XXIII, 50—51.

[2] John, XI, 3: "Quem diligis infirmatur."

[3] John, XI, 1: "Ἦν δε τις ἀσθενῶν." — "Morbo detinebatur," says the Syriac version.

[4] John, XI, 1. — However, according to Raban Maur, Lazarus usually enjoyed good health: "Floridæ juventutis."

able depression of spirits.[1] For the invalid, Bethany had become in reality the *house of sorrow*[2], and the absence of the divine Friend added still more to its sadness. This is why Martha and Magdalen hastened to inform Jesus, that He might at least bring to their brother the consolation of His presence. They had no doubt of His willingness to return, because they were sure of His affection, and the beloved disciple justifies their confidence; in fact he says, "Jesus loved Martha and her sister Magdalen, and Lazarus."

However, after having received the news, He contented Himself with replying: "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God: that the Son of God may be glorified by it," — and He remained two days longer in the same place where the messenger had found Him. Astonished at this delay, the Apostles were no less so to hear Him say on the third day: "Let us go into Judea again." — "Rabbi", they replied, "the Jews but just now sought to stone Thee; and goest Thou thither again?" — Jesus answered; "Are there not twelve hours of the day? If a man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world; but if he walk in the night, he stumbleth, because the light is not in him." And while they strove to understand His thoughts, the expression of which seemed somewhat ambiguous,

[1] "Morboso, gravia habens genua, flagellabatur Lazarus aestu, membrivora plaga tabefactus." (*Explicat. Evangel. sec. Joannem*, loc. cit.)

[2] "Beth-Anio", according to the Syriac text: "*Domus afflictionis.*"

He said: "Lazarus our friend sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep." — "Lord, if he sleep," observed the disciples, "he shall do well." It was so long since the poor invalid had been able to sleep, that the thought of this refreshing repose had brought joy to their hearts, but a word sufficed to dispel their hopes. — "Lazarus is dead. And I am glad for your sake that I was not there, that you may believe: but let us go to him!" — "Let us also go," said Thomas, addressing his colleagues, "that we may die with Him!" Then they went up towards Bethany where Lazarus had slept, the sleep of the tomb, for four days.

Now, many of the Jews had come to Martha and Magdalen to offer their condolence and consolations. As soon as Martha learnt of the approach of Jesus, leaving Magdalen, she hastened to meet Him; and running to the Master she cried out to Him in broken accents: "Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died!" — Then recovering her habitual confidence even in the depths of her sorrow, she added: "But now also I know that whatsoever Thou wilt ask of God, God will give it Thee!" Was it possible to make a more direct appeal to the friendship of the Man or the omnipotence of God?—"Thy brother shall rise again," said Jesus.—"Yes, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day." Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in Me, although he be dead, shall live: And everyone that liveth, and believeth in Me, shall not die for ever. Believest thou this?"

For an instant the Man disappeared and imposed silence on friendship, to allow the All-Powerful to appear and to speak. The scene is one of incomparable grandeur. Here, Jesus is more magnificent than on Thabor, and we should imagine that no word could be the echo of His own, had we not the reply of Martha: — "Yea, Lord, I have believed that Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God, who art come into this world!"

Then, going to Magdalen, she said to her in a low voice: "The Master is come, and calleth for thee." Magdalen rose at once and ran to Jesus. He had not yet come into the house, but remained where Martha had met Him. The crowd of Jews followed, believing that Magdalen was going to weep over the tomb; but they saw her throw herself at the feet of Jesus, crying,—she also: "Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." This was too much for the heart of the divine Friend. The tears of Magdalen and her companions troubled Him, and He trembled with agitation. — "Where have you laid him?" He asked through His tears. — "Lord, come and see," they replied; and whispering low, they said one to another: "How He loved him!" Others, it is true, dared to murmur: "Could not He that opened the eyes of the man born blind, have caused that Lazarus should not die?" — But without taking notice of their words, He came to the tomb and stopped on its threshold.

The sepulchre of Lazarus was a vault hollowed

out of the solid rock, at the bottom of a natural cave, which was entered by some steps descending from the surface; a flag-stone closed its mouth.[1] — "Take away the stone," Jesus commanded amid general astonishment, for custom forbade the touching of the stone after the third day. Martha ventured to speak: "Lord", she said, choosing words in keeping with the trouble of the divine Friend while recalling to Him the custom which He appeared to forget, — "Lord, by this time he stinketh; for he hath been dead four days." — "Did I not say to thee," replied the Master gravely, "that if thou wilt believe, thou shalt see the glory of God?" Martha understood; the stone was removed, and standing at the entrance to the tomb, His eyes raised to Heaven, Jesus began to pray: "Father, I give Thee thanks that Thou hast heard Me. And I know that Thou hearest Me always; but because of the people who stand about have I said it; that they may believe that Thou hast sent Me." Then, in majestic tones, He cried out: "Lazarus, come forth!" — And at once, impelled by an irresistible force, the dead man came towards them, his hands and feet tied with bandages, and his face hidden with the shroud. — "Loose him," Jesus said quietly, "and let him go."

In their bewilderment the Pharisees allowed him to pass; but they were sure to find him again,

[1] This venerated monument is much injured and time-worn. The rock "which one can easily see was of clayish formation," says Frère Liévin, has crumbled away, and one is obliged to conclude that the burial-place was a bank surmounted by a vault, according to custom.

and to seek means to efface the impression produced on many of the assembled people, and on the public at Jerusalem. The multitude, in fact, hurried on to Bethany, that they might see the wonder-worker and contemplate the man raised to life.[1] Not having at their disposal the knowledge and the logic with which M. Renan would astonish the nineteenth century,[2] they were reduced to desire the death of him whose return to life they could not deny. They then came together, and held, in conjunction with the Ancients, the Scribes, and the Priests, under the presidency of Caiphas, that fatal council at which the death of Jesus was decreed.[3] Once on this downward course it was difficult to stop, and the death of Lazarus was also resolved upon[4]; in this way the prophet and his living witness would disappear at a single stroke, and the Synagogue should have no longer any fear of its peace being troubled.

But if it pleased the Master to be for the moment their victim, because His death was to be the salvation of the world, He had determined that they should not touch His disciple. By His order, we should think, Lazarus disappeared. We do not find any trace of him either on Calvary, at the sepulchre, or in the supper-room[5]: nevertheless

[1] John, XII, 9.

[2] *Vie de Jésus,* c. XXII, p. 359 and following.

[3] John. XI, 47–53.

[4] Id., XII, 10.

[5] Raban Maur, generally so careful to bring him into prominence (c. XXXI and c. XXXIV, for instance), appears to have forgotten him completely on these occasions. Tradi-

we cannot admit that he would have been absent, if a higher will had not ordained that he should stand aside. In admitting, with Catherine Emmerich, that he had not at first recognised the divinity of his Friend, the veil of doubt must have fallen with the shroud, and the truth had in all likelihood dawned upon him in the shades of death, through which he had passed. Gratitude should have lent enthusiasm and stability to his new faith, which would necessarily place him among those who surrounded the dying Master. However, the Gospel and tradition, while noting the presence at the foot of the Cross, of John, Magdalen, and the other pious women, make no mention of Lazarus. The same solicitude which had prompted Jesus to say, in the Garden of Olives, "If you seek Me, let these go their way,"[1] seems to have inspired the precautions which shielded Lazarus. Jesus consented to shed His own blood, but it would have grieved Him too much to allow the blood of His friends to be shed also. If He was, later on, to make them martyrs for their faith, the present moment was not propitious for their testimony. He alone ought, and wished to appear, as His replies to the pontiffs, who considered His disciples equally guilty, clearly prove.[2] For this was He born, and for this He came into the world, to give

tion is also silent on this point, and Catherine Emmerich herself has only a few unimportant words to say on the subject. (Douloureuse Passion c. XXXVIII.)

[1] John, XVIII, 8: "Si ergo me quaeritis, sinite hos abire."

[2] John, XVIII, 19–20: "*Ego* palam locutus sum," etc.

testimony to the truth[1]; until He re-entered into glory, He alone assumed the responsibility of a mission which He had not yet shared with anyone.

The compulsory retirement of Lazarus did not prevent his loving or serving the Master. Pious beliefs tell us that immediately after the Resurrection, he received the disciples into his house, where Jesus frequently came to instruct them.[2] A special farewell should have been vouchsafed to him when the divine Friend left Bethany for the summit of the Mount of Olives on the day of the Ascension[3]: this should not surprise us — quite the contrary — for we know the tenderness of Jesus, and the devotion of Lazarus. He had not always seen the luminous cloud that overshadowed the glorified humanity of the Saviour,[4] but he had no need of the apparition of Angels to know that the moment was at hand when he should see a new manifestation of His power.[5]

After the Ascension and Pentecost, the house of Lazarus continued to be a centre of reunion for the Apostles and their new converts. Having distributed generous alms in the neighbourhood[6], the brother of Martha and Magdalen imitated with

[1] Id., *ibid.*, 37: "*Ego* in hoc natus et ad hoc veni in mundum, ut testimonium perhibeam veritati."

[2] Catherine Emmerich, *Visions*, V. partie, ch. XII, and XIV.

[3] Id., *Visions*, loc. cit., ch. XV.

[4] Raban Maur (*Vita B. Mariæ Magdalenæ*, c. XXXI) does not seem to agree here with Catherine. He appears to think that Lazarus was present at the Ascension.

[5] Act. Apost., I, 10—11.

[6] Cath. Emmerich, *Visions*, V. partie, c. V.

them,[1] the personal sacrifice of the Cyprian levite, Barnabas, who placed at the Apostle's feet the price of his goods which he had sold for the profit of the Christian community.[2] He had been ordained priest, and soon after being raised to the episcopate[3], he laboured through a thousand difficulties, for the propagation of the Gospel among the Jews of Bethania, when the death of Stephen and the fury of Saul placed the churches of Jerusalem and Judea in so great danger. The first consequence of this agitation was the dispersion of the Apostles and the most prominent disciples, and as Galilee seemed not to have felt the reaction, Lazarus could safely seek refuge there.

But in again approaching Phœnicia, which his father had formerly governed, he could not but think of carrying to them the tidings of joy; then the distance from the coast to the island of Cyprus was so short, that he felt drawn to that people who should become dear to him in his eagerness to gain disciples to the Gospel, while waiting the apostle destined to teach them. Lazarus knew Barnabas, and was undoubtedly friendly with his nephew, John-Mark, son of the Mary in whose house Peter was received when he left the prison of Agrippa.[4] Did Barnabas, who was sent by Peter to Antioch[5],

[1] Raban Maur, op. cit., c. XXXIV; — James of Vorag.: *De S. Maria Magdalena.*

[2] Act. Apost., IV, 36—37.

[3] Raban Maur, *loc. cit.*, c. XXXV. — The ancient breviary of Autun leads us to suppose that he also took part in the government of the Church of Jerusalem.

[4] Act. Apost., XII, 12.

[5] Id., XI, 25.

to study the movement which was going on there in favour of Jesus-Christ, see Lazarus in Phœnicia and urge him to preach to the Israelites of Cyprus, or did Lazarus obey a special inspiration in going to them? It is impossible for us to decide, but it seems reasonable to combine both inspirations, because Barnabas had already belonged to the college of the Ancients who directed the primitive Church, and Lazarus had too much humility to take on himself a ministry which had not been suggested to him.

But in any case, we know for certain that the Gospel was announced at this date in the island of Cyprus, but only to the Jews,[1] as was the custom up to that time; and that Lazarus, fixing his see at Kition or Citium,[2] became the Bishop of this new Christian community,[3] which soon, of itself, produced preachers fruitful in works of salvation.[4] Four years passed by,[5] after which we again find the brother of Magdalen at Joppa, having returned for a short time to the country of his

[1] Act. Apost., XI, 19.

[2] Now *Larnaka*, on the east coast of the island. It was, according to the ancient Cyprians, an altogether Syrian town. The Phœnician name *Kittim* was given by the Greeks to the inhabitants of *Citium*.

[3] Raban Maur, *op. cit.*, c. XXXV and XXXVI: "Reverendissimo fratre ejus (Magdalenæ) Lazaro tunc apud Cyprum pontificante." — Cf. Natal Alexand., *Hist. Eccl.*, t. III, *Dissert.* 17; — *Ménologe* des Grecs (*Oriens christianus*, t. II, fol. 1055).

[4] Act. Apost., XI, 20—21.

[5] From 38 to 42, supposing that Lazarus did not go to Cyprus in the year 37, which seems to us improbable, but not impossible.

ancestors, whence persecution was at last to exile him for ever.[1]

Herod Agrippa, wishing to please the Sanhedrin, had put James, the brother of John, to death; then he had ordered Peter to be thrown into prison, intending to send him to be tortured during the Paschal festivities.[2] Miraculously delivered, the chief of the Apostles had given his colleagues the signal for a definite dispersion, leaving only at Jerusalem, James, *the brother of the Lord*, who was its Bishop. This separation was put into execution during a popular turmoil excited by the Scribes and Pharisees. The Apostles had been able to fly and to gain the frontiers without being arrested, but the disciples were less fortunate.

Peter had grouped around the sisters of Lazarus, the Bishop Maximin, who had taken charge of the church of Bethania, — the deacon Parmenas, of whom the Acts might have said, as of Stephen, *full of strength and grace before God*, — the disciple Cedonius, the blind man whose sight Jesus had restored,[3] — Marcella, the favourite servant of Martha, the woman who, it is believed, publicly extolled the maternity of Mary,[4] Trophimus,

[1] The opinion that Lazarus went alone to Marseilles to there rejoin his sisters, seems to us to have little probability, although it is maintained by some reliable authorities. — Cf. Faillon (Monuments inédits, t. II), quoting from *Vie de Saint Lazare*, 1636.

[2] Act. Apost., XII, 1—4.

[3] John, IX, 1—38.

[4] Luke, XI, 27: "Blessed is the womb that bore Thee," etc.

Martial,[1] — Evodius, Synthex, Epaphras, and some others whose names remain unknown. Another group, presided over by Mary, the wife of Cleophas, and mother of James the Less and Jude, — comprised Mary Salome, the mother of John the Evangelist and James the Greater, with her servant Sarah,[2] and several other holy women. On leaving Palestine, the Prince of the Apostles had sent on this holy company towards the port of Joppa,[3] whence it should cross the sea to Gaul, which he had fixed on for its destination. Was he thus executing the will of the Master, bequeathing to our country these living relics of His life, as Père Lacordaire says,[4] or was he already obeying that impulse of the heart which impels the Vicars of Jesus-Christ towards France? It is the secret of this gracious Providence,[5] to whom we must return thanks for having "transported Bethany across the seas and prepared for those who loved Him an unending hospitality on shores that should be for ever Christian."[6]

Jaffa, built upon the sea, on the northern bor-

[1] The boy who provided, in the desert, the loaves and fishes that Jesus multiplied (Luke, IX, 13; John, VI, 9), according to a tradition which Baronius has recorded in his *Annals*, year 74, No. 15.

[2] Whom some have regarded as the repudiated wife of Pilate. The vagrant Bohemians have taken her for their patron.

[3] Now Jaffa. — The ancient *Jafo* of Joshua (XIX, 46).

[4] Lacordaire, *Sainte Marie-Madeleine*.

[5] Raban Maur, op. cit., c. XXXVI: "Admirabili ergo dispositionis consilio," etc.

[6] Lacordaire, *Sainte Marie-Madeleine*, c. II.

der of the tribe of Dan, was the only port through which Palestine had communication with the Mediterranean. Subject to Roman domination in the year 6, it shared in the mixed population which prevailed in the important cities of the provinces, particularly in Asia: free in almost every respect, with a Roman garrison that allowed anything to pass that did not concern Rome or Cæsar, — insufficient, moreover, to repress any serious disturbance, as it happened in 66. At Joppa the new faith had many adherents, among whom Simon the Tanner,[1] and Tabitha[2] are still celebrated. Peter had stayed in Simon's house, and it was there he had the vision that decided the apostolate of the Gentiles.[3] This is why the fugitives from Bethany might hope to wait quietly there the opportunity of embarking for the West. But God disposed of them in quite another way.

The malice of the Jews sometimes pursued to a great distance those whom it designed to strike. After having been its instrument at Damascus, Paul was to become its victim at Antioch, Iconium, Thessalonica, and also elsewhere. The violence exercised against the disciples of Christ was known at Joppa, and the thought of renewing it against His most intimate friends should find favour among the populace who were so easily roused. At the

[1] Act. Apost., X, 6: "He (Peter) lodgeth with one *Simon* a tanner, whose house is by the sea-side."

[2] Id., IX, 36—42: "*Tabitha*, which, being interpreted, is called Dorcas."

[3] Act. Apost., X, 9–15. — A small mosque has replaced the oratory built on the site of this house.

moment when Lazarus and his companions were preparing to embark, the crowd rushed upon them, inflicting insults and injuries, pillaged the ship, dispersed the crew, and to finish all, left them without pilot[1] or rigging[2] to the dangers of the sea. We have already said that egress from the port of Jaffa is almost impossible to any except experienced sailors, particularly in high winds, on account of the reefs which bar the entrance, and to cross which one must pass at a favourable tide, always difficult to utilise at the precise moment. Thus, to compel the friends of Jesus to pass the channels of the roadstead, was to send them to certain death. But God watched over them. The wind, blowing from the south-east,[3] soon carried them out of sight and beyond reach of attack, bearing them gently towards more hospitable shores. Probably they met some strange vessel, and were revictualled by it, without touching at any point on the coasts, for Raban Maur, who minutely describes their voyage across the Mediterranean, indicates no port touched at before Marseilles;[4] hence we have the proof that no tradition has preserved the memory of their voyage along the coasts of Africa and Italy.

[1] "Sine aliquo gubernatore," James of Voragine simply remarks, but does not mention the loss of the rigging.

[2] "Sine velo ac remigio" (Brev. Rom. Ex Act. prob.,. — In a very ancient *Life of Saint Martha*, which Raban Maur knew, we find the same details: "Remis ablatis vel gubernaculis et hujus modi nauticis armamentis et omnibus copiis et subsidiis."

[3] "Flante *Euro*", says Raban Maur, *op. cit.*, c. XXXVII.

[4] De Vita B. Mariæ Magdalenæ, c. XXXVII.

Modern criticism has disputed — more or less vigorously, according to circumstances — the story of this departure from Joppa, which, it says, is merely an adaptation of a belief accepted in the twelfth century. Without pausing to discover the origin of the belief, we may say at once that its probability leads us to regard it as true. This is why we have not hesitated to admit it, and why we desire to retain it, till we have evidence to the contrary. But, as we have seen, we do not believe a miracle necessary to explain the successful passage of the fugitives across the Ionian and the Tyrrhenian seas, which those going to Gaul and the neighbouring countries usually traversed. The account of the voyage made by the first Apostles of Spain[1] contains the same details with regard to the absence of pilot and rigging, which seems to sufficiently confirm the belief that we have put forward. This account supposes, in fact, that the friends of Jesus-Christ and the companions of Saint Ctesiphon sailed in the same ship and followed the same course.[2]

When the vessel touched land,[3] the exiles found themselves at the mouth of a wide river, forming, like the Nile, a vast marshy delta. This was the Rhone, and this delta is still recognised in the

[1] This account is anterior to the 10th century. (Floriacensis vetus Bibliotheca. *Opera* Joann. A. Bosco: Celestin; Comment. de Translatione S. Jacobi.)

[2] E. de F., *Sainte Marthe*, p. 92 and following.

[3] At the place anciently called (antiquitus) by the name *Ithaecados*. (Gervais de Tilbury, *Otia imperialia*.)

Camargue, a gloomy solitude cut up with ponds, swamp, and pasturage, between Arles and the sea.[1] Only shepherds and boatmen frequented these waters and pasture lands, — simple people, who welcomed the new arrivals kindly, listened with docility to their teachings, and thus became the first fruits of the apostolate in Gaul.

Leaving behind them Mary, the mother of James, Salome, and their servant Sarah, whom Trophimus was to take under his charge, after he had established himself in the neighbouring city, Lazarus and his other companions went towards Marseilles, guided by the fishermen of the Vaccarès, whom we believe to have been colonists from Marseilles.[2] Trophimus remained at Arles; several of his companions reached the centre and west of Gaul,[3] so that the little band was very much diminished when it reached the gates of the Athens of the Gauls, the learned and cultured city which had given lessons in eloquence to Cicero and Julius Cæsar, the fortunate city, "where Greek elegance," according to Tacitus (who forgets Petronius), "mingled with the rudeness of provincial manners." The welcome there could not have been so enthusiastic as on the shores of the Camargue.

[1] V. Lenthéric, *Les villes mortes du Golfe de Lyon.* — It is a triangle bounded on the north by the town of Arles, on the west by the town of Aiguesmortes, and on the east by the Gulf of Fos.

[2] Cf. Lamoureux, *Manuel pour le pèlerinage des Saintes Maries*, p. 12. — The estuary of the Rhone was then called *Gradus Massilianorum.*

[3] Raban Maur, *op. cit.* — Jacob. de Vorag., *loc. cit.*, etc.

The descendants of the Phoceans seemed not to remember the hospitality that had greeted their ancestors on their arrival in the land of the Segobrian Celts. Less happy than their companions of the Euxine, Lazarus, Martha, and Magdalen remained abandoned for several days under the peristyle of the Temple of Diana,[1] waiting in vain for any mark of sympathy. Then the words of Martha drew the crowd,[2] which assembled from curiosity; Magdalen's charm, it is said, attracted the wife of the chief magistrate of the city,[3] and the number of conversions soon recompensed the zeal of the saintly friends of the Saviour. Lazarus was naturally destined to occupy the episcopal throne of the new christian community, and for thirty years he gave evidence of all the virtues proper to a Bishop.[4]

These thirty years saw many events accomplished that were either useful or hurtful to the Church and Empire. Caligula, Claudius, Nero, Galba, Otho, Vitellius, occupied successively in Rome a throne stained with blood, to which Ves-

[1] It became later the church of *Notre-Dame-la-Major*, now destroyed.

[2] Catherine Emmerich, *Visions*, VI. partie, c. VII. — Cf. *Brev. Rom.*, die XXIX Julii.

[3] Jacob. Vorag., *De beata Maria Magdalena*. — Marseilles was governed by three supreme magistrates or triumvirs, representing the Great Council, and whom the *Actes de Saint Lazare* call *consuls*.

[4] Brev. Rom.; — Brev. Augustodun. Acta Eccl. Massil. — "A most faithful shepherd, vigilantly watchful over his flock . . . . gentle in his humility, prosperous in his poverty, beautiful in his purity, fervent in his charity, he comforted the Lord's sheep."

pasian succeeded after the destruction of Jerusalem, and set at naught the nationality and priesthood of Israel. When the year 72 began, Peter and Paul had suffered martyrdom at Rome, and several other Apostles in various regions[1]: John, almost the only one remaining of the first companions of the Master, was preparing the fourth Gospel, and presiding over the infant Church in Asia Minor. Christianity, persecuted in Palestine, had already overrun almost the whole of the empire, owing to a relative peace which Nero had disturbed for a time, but which was quickly re-established under the pacific influence of Vespasian. Doctrines were formulated, the hierarchy organised, the supremacy of the See of Rome firmly assured. The three first Gospels were in the hands of all the faithful, as well as the Epistles of Paul, Peter, and James,[2] — the Acts of the Apostles, — the Letters and the Constitutions of Clement. Frequent visits kept the Christians in touch with each other, and with the head of Catholicity, as we see by the voyage of Alexander of Brescia, who came, in the reign of Claudius, to visit Lazarus at Marseilles, and Maximin at Aix,[3] and by the journey which the chief magistrate of Marseilles and his wife made to

[1] Saint Andrew, Saint James the Less, Saint Bartholomew, etc. The date of the martyrdom of Saint Thomas and of Saint Matthew is uncertain: it is said to have occurred in the year 80, that of the death of Saint Simon and Saint Jude.

[2] Perhaps also that of Barnabas, which the ancients held in great esteem.

[3] *Acta S. Alexandri* (Bolland. ad 26. Aug.).

visit Saint Peter at Rome.[1] The Gauls, evangelised from one extremity of their country to the other, knew Jesus Christ, and the Bishops of the southern provinces formed around Lazarus a wonderful circle of sons, disciples, and friends.

But happy as his soul might be at the success obtained, it could not but feel sad sometimes in the loneliness in which the departure of Magdalen for Sainte-Baume, and of Martha for Tarascon, had left it. In going away, the two holy women had taken with them the last reflection of the sun of Palestine, and the last trace of the proximity of Jesus. No longer able to look towards the East without perceiving the death image of Sion in ruins, and Israel bathed in blood,[2] had not Lazarus the right to seek around him a less sorrowful reflection of country and friendship? God had taken that from him with all the rest, and, placed between these two barriers, the sea and the mountains that closed the way towards those he loved, his heart was oppressed sometimes, while tears welled in his eyes at the thought of those whom he should never see again on earth.

Soon came other anxieties and anguish. After the extremely precise testimony of Orosius and Sulpicius Severus, the edicts of Nero, remaining

[1] Jacob. A. Vorag. (B. Maria Magdalena). This voyage, although somewhat of a legendary character, is not improbable in itself, and is in complete accord with the ideas of the time.

[2] The taking of Massada by Lucilius Bassus (22 April 72) had just completed the conquest of Palestine and the ruin of

in vigour, left to the discretion of the magistrates the power of molesting the Christians or of ignoring them. From time to time the whim of a proconsul or pretor raised scaffolds, without any specific intention of using them, and this accounts for the fact that Melito[1] and Tertullian[2] do not state that any persecution took place between the reigns of Nero and Domitian. The Flavians, from the first having little sympathy with the Christians, left them, however, in peace, particularly since they had taken a liking to the Jews admitted to their court. There was not, then, much to fear from Vespasian and his lieutenants in the provinces, but danger might always come from another quarter.

In those turbulent cities bordering the shores of the Mediterranean, — Alexandria, Smyrna, Naples, Syracuse, — where the population, essentially cosmopolitan, was perpetually disturbed, there were frequent outbursts of fanaticism against which the police of the decurions were powerless. Recent events in Syria and Palestine had stirred up feelings against the Jews, whom they affected sometimes to confound with the Christians, particularly when these were of Jewish origin.[3] Massacres had

Israel. Nearly 1,200,000 dead and 97,000 prisoners attested the obstinate resistance and overwhelming destruction of the Jews. (V. Champagny, *Rome et la Judée*, cit. Josephus, Bell. Jud., V and VI.)

[1] Ap. Eusebius, Hist. Eccl., VI, 24.

[2] Apolog., 5.

[3] This confusion became almost unavoidable when certain jewish sects called themselves by the names sometimes applied to the Christians: *Galileans*, *Nazareans*, etc. (Baronius, *Annal.*, of the year 74).

dyed with blood the streets of several Asiatic and Greek cities, with which Marseilles was in daily communication. Therefore, it was easy to foresee that the slightest incident would provoke a popular movement, fraught with disastrous consequences.[1] But the Jews did not always afford the pretext for these insurrections: in many instances the responsibility of these revolts rested, at least partly, with themselves, and it was to be feared that it was the same in other places. Those among them who lived out of Asia, in the remote provinces of the Empire, had but a very indifferent regard for the prophecies, being rather occupied with their traffic and their fortune; almost identified with the pagans among whom they had lived so long, they remained tranquil during the progress of the campaign of Vespasian against the revolutionists of Palestine. "But", says Champagny, "the downfall of Jerusalem which should have terrified them and rendered them crestfallen, excited and roused them. The victory of Titus cast upon the world a crowd of fugitive Israelites. All the hired assassins were not at Massada, and to plead their cause, the most ancient and most tenacious of the Jewish revolutionary factions, many victims, many missionaries, many heroes, appeared in the synagogues of the Roman empire. Their doctrine, that God is the only sovereign, was propagated more and more at the moment

[1] Champagny, *Rome et la Judée*, t. I. — Paul Allart, *Hist. des Persécutions*, t. I.

when earthly power pressed most heavily over Judea."[1]

In towns of oriental origin and mixed population, such as Marseilles, excitement must have run high at this period, and the mutual understanding between the chiefs of the Synagogue and the Roman magistrates for the repression of agitators, should end in violence of every kind. In similar cases, the hatred of the Jews for the Christians took the place of the hatred of the pagans for the Israelites,— more especially if faith in Jesus Christ had brought about developments capable of exciting the jealousy of the votaries of Moses. Besides, the anxiety of Vespasian to seek out and suppress the descendants of David, in order to nullify the prophecies regarding this family,[2] should have brought danger to Lazarus and his friends, which fatally compromised the Christians under their care, however little a denunciation rendered them liable to prosecution.

This contingency seems to have been realised in the year 72, we know not by what chain of circumstances.[3] All that we can say is that during

[1] Champagny, Rome et la Judée, c. XVI. — Cf. Baronius, Annal., of the year 74; — S. Epiphanes, *Haeres.*, XIX.

[2] Baronius, *Annal.*, ad ann. 73, No. 11, cit. Eusebius, *Hist.*, lib. III, c. 2. (On the authority of the chronology of Baronius, we must trace back these researches to the date which we have accepted.)

[3] The *Actes de S. Lazare* fix the date of his martyrdom under Domitian. "Regnante Domitiano Caesare." But it is difficult to make this assertion agree with certain other documents. However, the death of Lazarus has been fixed at various dates by ancient authors. (V. S. Epiphanes, etc.)

this year we find Lazarus and the faithful of Massilia, refugees in the open crypts beside the rock that then overhung the old port[1] on the southern side. There is still shown in the subterranean church of Saint Victor, to the left of the altar, a bench cut in the stone, on which the holy Bishop sat when presiding at the ceremonies of worship. This retreat was not sufficiently secure, and the public slaves, charged by the police,[2] soon discovered the illustrious refugee, whom they dragged forth, inflicting serious injuries by their blows.

The riotous mob wished to punish without delay the apostasy of the Christians, and brought them straight to the tribunal, situated at a great distance from the place where they had been surprised. The town, in fact, was built on the other side of the port, in the position now occupied by old Marseilles, — from the Cannebière to the Major; and the Pretorium, if it were near the public prisons, must have stood between the rising ground of Saint-Laurent, and that of Moulins, a little to the north, near the Place de Linche, where the ruins of these prisons still exist.[3] The way was long, and must have been most painful to the old man, as he was dragged along with curses, and

[1] The *Lacydon* of the Greeks, on the north of which stood the tower. — The rock that hangs over the south port is now the Fort Saint-Nicolas. The church of Saint-Victor, built over the crypt of Saint Lazarus, is near that part of the port called Bassin de Carénage.

[2] Cf. Dion, LIV, and LV.

[3] V. Faillon, *Monuments inédits;* — Grosson, *Recueil des Antiq. de Marseille.*

threats, and bad treatment, which, doubtless, recalled to him the way from Gethsemani to the tribunal of Caiphas.[1] Like Pilate, perhaps, the Roman magistrate[2] may have found the zeal of his agents and the eagerness of the multitude inopportune. The edicts of Nero had not been revoked, but Cæsar-Vespasian allowed them to remain in abeyance, since he was anxious to maintain peace around him and repress the agitations of the populace. Perhaps, like Pilate also, the judge was constrained to yield to the menacing demands with which he was assailed, and condemn the accused to be scourged, then shut up in the adjoining prison after he had publicly confessed his belief in Jesus Christ, the Son of God.[3]

To be imprisoned in a dungeon deprived of air and light,[4] which recalls the *Tullianum* of the Mamertine prison, was so dreadful to the ancients, that they praised Otho when he did not condemn Cornelius Dolabella, the father of Galba, to prison, suspected though he was of aspiring to the empire.[5] It was an earnest of approaching death,

[1] V. Acta S. Lazari (fragments), in the *Annals Massil.*

[2] The tribunal was composed of several magistrates, for the *Actes* say: "Consulibus", who must have been the triumvirs of whom we have already spoken

[3] The prison of Saint Lazarus is still shown at Marseilles, — a little square chamber, at the north-east angle of the oriental gallery of the *Caves de Saint-Sauveur*, on the Place de Linche.

[4] "In carcere obscurissimo subterraneo." *Act. S. Lazari* (fragments preserved in the liturgy of Autun).

[5] Tacitus, Hist., I, 88: "Neque arcta custodia neque obscura."

and no one came out therefrom except to torture, unless the lictor had already accomplished his office, as in the case of the accomplices of Catiline and the vanquished heroes of Gaul and Asia; whence the name — Carnificina, the place of the executioner.[1]

Lazarus was thence to be escorted to the altar of Mars,[2] and to confess for the last time his Master and his Friend: "Raised from the dead by Christ," he said vehemently, "I have lived for Him, and I have nothing more to do but to die for Him!"— a reply deserving every torture in the judgment of those sweet-mannered Ionians, among whom "the sword of the headsman grew rusty."[3] By the judge's order the sides of the martyr were torn with iron combs and his shoulders burnt with metal plates: then he was laid on a gridiron reddened at the fire, so that there remained no part of his poor body that did not experience atrocious suffering.[4] Useless trouble! Lazarus did not seem to feel either the bitings of the steel or the burning of the fire, lost as he was in the vision of Christ seated at the right hand of His Father. The lictor then took him and gave him as a target to the archers of the Prætorian Guard; the arrows, we

[1] Rich, *Dictionnaire*, vis. *Carcer*, *Carnificina*, *Tullianum*.

[2] "Ante Martis simulacrum." This determines the place of confession and martyrdom in the enclosure of the citadel, where the idols of Mars and Apollo were kept.

[3] Durny, *Hist. des Grecs*, t. I, p. 716.

[4] *Act. S. Lazari* (fragments found in the ancient breviaries of Autun, Nantes, and Marseilles).

are told, refused to penetrate his flesh, and they were obliged to have recourse to the sword to end his life.[1] It was the first day of the kalends of September,[2] of the Roman year 825, the fourth of the principality of Vespasian, who then shared the honours of the consulate with his son Titus, — the fifth of the pontificate of Saint Clement, the second successor of Saint Peter.[3] On this first day of the kalends, the priests of the idols were accustomed to announce to the people the feasts that they should celebrate during the month; they little suspected that the hand of the true God would inscribe, on the calendar of His immortal Church, a feast which the centuries would celebrate for ever.

Thus Lazarus paid his debt to the friendship which had formerly drawn him from death! He had given life for life, and his last sigh must have expired in a smile. He went to Jesus with peaceful soul, certain of the sweet welcome which the Church wishes for her children about to quit the world, and he was sure of having a place among those who sit with Him in heaven,[4] apostles, virgins, and martyrs. The disciples who gathered

[1] *Actes de l'Église de Marseille;* — Relation des religieux de Béthanie, etc.

[2] 1st September 72 of the common era. — Others say 31st August, because they read *pridie calendas*, — instead of *prima die calendarum*.

[3] He had succeeded in 67 to Saint Linus.

[4] "May Jesus meek and smiling meet thee and decree, that thou shalt be forever of the number of those who are seated around Him." (Commendatio animae in transitu.)

his remains and placed them in the crypt where he had exercised the episcopal ministry, should have engraved upon his tomb the words that are the epitome of his history, and his panegyric, those which the Son of God spoke to the Apostles: "Lazarus amicus noster dormit, sed vado ut a somno excitem eum: Lazarus our friend sleepeth[1], but I am here, ready to awake him, to open for him the joyous activity of My eternal day!"[2]

[1] "Percussa cervice a spiculatore in Deo dulciter obdormivit, juxta id Christi dicentis: "S. Lazarus amicus noster dormit." — *Act. S. Lazari* (in liturg. augustodun.).

[2] John, VIII, 56: "Your father Abraham rejoiced that he might see My day: he saw it, and was glad."

Chapter II.

Martha.

"Now Jesus loved Martha."
John XI, 5.

The traveller who wends his way from Jericho to Jerusalem passes, when leaving Ouady-el-Haoudh, a fountain at which it is usual to rest, and which bears the name of the fountain of the Apostles[1], the En-Chemeh of the Bible.[2] On the right, a footpath winds up the rocky hills and ends on a plateau, from which the view extends to the east, as far as the mountains of Moab above the road from Jericho, the Valley of the Jordan, and the Dead Sea, — to the south, over the hills and valleys which rise and fall in the direction of Bethlehem and Herodium,[3] — to the west, over the summit of Olives and a village in the intervening space, surmounted by the ruins of a tower which is easily seen to be of Gothic construction. This tower has been named by the Christians the Castle of Lazarus, and the village owes to the Arabs the name of Al-Aïzirieh. It is Bethany, the place

[1] In arabic *Aïn el Haoudh*, the fountain of the Angel.

[2] "Passing thence to the north, and going out to *Ensemes*, that is to say the fountain of the sun." (Jos., XVIII, 17.)

[3] *Djebel Fureidis*, or Mont des Francs, to the S. E. of Bethlehem. Close by is seen *Aboudiss*, probably the *Bahurim* of the Bible. (II. Reg., XVI, 5.)

the Saviour honoured so often with His presence, because of the friends whose hospitality He sought. There lived Lazarus, Martha, and Magdalen, and there is still shown the site of the house where Martha devoted herself to serve the Master, — that of the dwelling of Simon the Leper, where Mary renewed the anointing of Capharnaum, — and lastly, the tomb from which Lazarus arose at the command of Jesus. But while Bethany appears to thus belong to the whole family, it is more especially Martha's, for the Gospel designates her alone as the hostess of the divine traveller when on His way from the Jordan to Jerusalem.

In the first century of our era Bethany was a regular city[1] with a numerous population and every appearance of prosperity, as was still testified in the time of Raban Maur, by the remains of ancient buildings.[2] Its position, only two miles from Jerusalem, rendered intercourse with the city frequent, which was not interrupted even by the Sabbath rest,[3] and one supposes it to have been one of those

[1] "*Castrum* antiqui dicebant oppidum loco altissimo situm, cujus diminutivum *castellum* est," says Raban Maur (*De Universo*, lib. XIV, c. 1). — Elsewhere (*In Matth.*, lib. VI, c. 21) he says: "Bethania est villula sive civitas." — Luke, X, 38, and John, XI, 1, call Bethany "castellum."

[2] "That it was covered with buildings and thickly populated is sufficiently clear from traces of numerous foundations."

[3] By which is understood the evening of the Sabbath, when the official solemnity terminated, because Bethany was beyond the sabbatical limits. (*Techoum Aschabbath*), that is to say, two thousand cubits, nearly a kilometre. — The summit of Olives was within the limits (Act. Ap., I, 12).

country sojourns sometimes found within a walk of the outskirts of great cities. It was not fortified, as we learn from the silence of Scripture and Josephus, but was an unwalled town of far greater extent than at present, spreading its avenues and gardens some distance into the plain, as we now see at Jaffa. Though near the Temple and the Sanhedrin, the two great centres of the religious and political life of Israel, Bethany was not sufficiently influenced by them to confound fanaticism with patriotism or faith. At least, the perusal of the Gospel gives us this impression, and we feel that Jesus would wish to rest peacefully in an atmosphere totally different from that which He found at Jerusalem. Simon, though a Pharisee, had none of the haughtiness of his namesake in Galilee. Nothing in his surroundings indicated a hostile feeling or manner; quite the contrary. The vicinity of the traditional encampment of Galileans[1] in times of great feasts, had perhaps given a greater breadth and flexibility to the minds and life of the inhabitants of Bethany, which may also be accounted for by the assemblage of numerous pilgrims, Israelites and proselytes, appertaining to the Dispersion, from the confines of Palestine to those of the extreme East. Perhaps, also, the peaceful tolerance that appears to have prevailed

[1] They encamped on the summit of Olives and of the *Viri Galilæi:* the two table lands are separated by a slight depression. According to Saint Luke, XXIV, 50—51, who places the Ascension at Bethany, we may conclude that there were paths leading from the town to the summit of Olives.

at Bethany was due to the influence exercised by the powerful family of which Lazarus was the worthy son, and which was represented still better by his elder sister Martha, one of the most attractive women of evangelical history.

A daughter of Theophilus whom we have seen in the first rank of Syrian princes, and of Eucharis who loved to boast of her descent from David, she had probably been born in Phœnicia,[1] and must have been educated like the Greeks, while being taught the practice of the true religion by her parents.[2] She possessed, in common with her brother Lazarus and her sister Magdalen, a remarkably quick intelligence, a natural eloquence, a charming grace of manner, rare beauty, and a perfect knowledge of what was becoming to her position.[3] To these natural advantages Martha added qualities acquired by education, — modesty, prudence, affability, love of the poor, — with a certain quiet dignity which caused her to be loved and respected by all. Left an orphan, it would seem that before choosing a husband she made virginal chastity the law of her life, which she consecrated henceforth to the service of the two children asso-

[1] Raban Maur, c. I, makes Bethany her birth-place, which is scarcely consistent with what he afterwards says, and also with the name of *Martha*, which is evidently Syrian. (*Martha* is the feminine form of *Mar*, which signifies *Lord*.) Some ancient writers have very nearly confounded Martha with the Syro-Phenician woman healed by our Lord (Luke, VIII, 45), and to whom Saint Ambrose gives the same name as our Saint.

[2] Raban Maur, *Vit. S. Mariæ Magdal.*, c. II.

[3] Id. ibid., c. II.

ciated in her sorrow. Lazarus, then very young, must have been a source of consolation to Martha, but Magdalen, scarcely on the threshold of life, brought her bitter sorrow while she awaited the deferred joy of her conversion. When the Gospel introduces her to us, she is in the full exercise of her guardianship over the lives and property of her brother and sister, with their consent. Although they had each a separate dwelling in different parts of Palestine, they elected to live together with the elder sister and to give her charge of their affairs. In this office, Raban Maur says, avoiding all arrogance and unkindness, she was able, nevertheless, to show a virile nature,[1] to the satisfaction of all. Thanks to her intelligent care of their interests, they lived in that abundance, or, to speak more correctly, in that opulence which their illustrious origin and the influence that they had a right to exercise, demanded.[2]

If Magdalen, who was regarded as one of the Creator's masterpieces,[3] reigned in her family by the charm of her mind and the beauty of her person, Martha ruled by the ascendancy of her prudence and sweetness, which she showed not only to her intimates and friends, as the ancient chroniclers say, but also to her neighbours, who for the greater part belonged to her under the

[1] Raban Maur, *Vit. S. Mariæ Magdal.*, c. II: "In femineo pectore virilem gerens animam."

[2] Raban Maur, *op. cit.*, c. II: "Deliciis affluebant."

[3] Id., *ibid.*, "Ut singulare atque mirificum opificis Dei diceretur figmentum."

titles of tenants, servants, workmen, or slaves.[1] — And, truly, it would have been difficult not to bow down before this daughter of kings when she appeared on the threshold of her dwelling, her head crowned with the Syrian mitre,[2] her tall figure[3] showing to advantage the elegant simplicity of her white linen garments[4]; and when, with her delicate hand,[5] adorned with costly rings,[6] she drew aside her veil, displaying the clear brilliancy of her eyes and the sweet smile upon her lips.[7]

But the joys and successes of this life are never secure, and Martha realised the fact. The departure of Magdalen after her marriage was the first sorrow the elder sister had experienced; keen, no doubt, but far less bitter than that caused by the excesses into which the penitent fell before long. Lazarus had the active life which tradition

[1] Evidently the writers of the middle ages pictured Martha as a châtelaine of their own time; however, we may believe that she did exercise a kind of sovereignty, the character of which it is difficult to define. (V. in Proverbs, XXXI, 10, and following; the portrait of a valiant woman.)

[2] It was her habitual head-dress. (Cf. Raban Maur, *op. cit.*, c. XLI.)

[3] We can estimate it from her arm and left hand, preserved in the church at Roujan, in the diocese of Montpelier.

[4] Still the costume of Arabic women: Martha wore it at Tarascon.

[5] The hand preserved at Roujan is *remarkably elegant in form*, says the author of *Vie de Sainte Marthe*, E. de F., p. 61.

[6] The Syrian and Jewish women wore a number of bracelets and rings. (Geres, XXIV, 22; — Num., XXXI, 50; — Isai., III, 21, etc.)

[7] Cant., IV, 3 and 11; V, 12 and 13; Prov., XV, 30.

assigns to him to turn his thoughts from the grief and shame of such a scandal. Martha could but shut herself up in comparative solitude, where the consolations of Marcella, — her courageous and faithful domestic,[1] — could but slightly mitigate her external sorrow. She had not, however, broken off all relations with her erring sister, in the hope that she would return to her duty, relying always more on fervent prayer than on the unwelcome advice which she so lovingly tendered.

Becoming, we know not how, the Saviour's disciple, she felt a secret assurance that she would one day bring back to Him this wandering sheep, who, she believed, could not look upon Jesus without being captivated, as she herself was, by the charm of His person and His words. She seems to have even consented to visit her sister from time to time at Magdala,[2] that her presence might moderate, perhaps, the impulse that possessed Mary to abandon herself to dissipation and error. It was thus that she persuaded her, not without some trouble,[3] to hear the prophet, and caused her at the same time, to reflect. Raban Maur tells us of Magdalen's emotion after she had heard Jesus

[1] Raban Maur, *op. cit.*, c. X: "Et domus suæ (Marthæ) procuratrix egregia Marcella."

[2] Raban Maur, *op. cit.*, c. X.—He maintains that Martha received Jesus there, following what is recorded in S. Luke, X, 38. — Cath. Emmerich, *Visions*, c. XLIX.

[3] *Visions* of Saint Veronica of Biasco *ut infra.—Grande Bible des Noëls*, p. 248 and following. –Catherine Emmerich, *Visions*, CXLIX. We quote these documents as evidences of tradition, but without attaching any great importance to them.

preach. "Know thyself, O Mary," — she said, — "and recall what thou hast been in thinking what thou shouldst become. Blush for thy fall; regret thy illusions; weep for thy sullied purity, the scandals thou hast given, the scorn thou hast shown to God, thy continual abuse of His best gifts. Think of the shortness of life, the certainty of death, the uncertain hour of thy end. . . Fear eternal death, and foresee the justice of the supreme accuser who shall be also thy judge!" — "Thus", continues the historian, borrowing the words of Job, "wisdom gives wings to the eagle to carry him to the place of the rising sun!"[1]

Then, joining the crowd of sick that surrounded Jesus, she begged of Him to heal the sufferings caused by the evil spirit that possessed her, and divine mercy gave her more than she asked, for the devil's flight allowed her to see clearly into her soul. Returning to Magdala, her first act was to throw herself, with burning tears, into Martha's arms. With caresses and soothing words Martha calmed the poor child,[2] helping her to cast aside her ornaments and praising God for her deliverance.[3] Marcella and Veronica[4] took part in this touching scene with all the affection which they bore the sisters, and all the joy they felt at having worked for this conversion.

[1] Raban Maur, *op. cit.*, c. V, cit. Job, XXXIX, 27.

[2] "*Adolescentula*", says Raban, c. V. She was scarcely twenty-one years of age, according to S. Vincent Ferrar. (Festivale, p. 186.)

[3] *Visions* of Saint Veronica of Biasco. (Act. SS. ad XIII Jan.)

[4] Act. SS., *ib.*; — D. Aurelien, *Saint Veronica*, — etc.

The following day, Jesus being at Capharnaum, at the house of Simon the Pharisee,—a friend and relative of Martha and Magdalen,[1]—the poor sinner gave public testimony of her repentance and received solemn pardon for her sins; after which she placed herself among the Redeemer's followers, with her sister and their friends, under the maternal direction of the Most Holy Virgin. The heart of Martha must have expanded with overflowing joy at seeing her sister thus conquered by the divine Friend. This zealous and gracious preacher,[2] who later on was to gain over entire peoples to Him, inaugurated her apostolate by the most desirable and joyous of conquests.

Thenceforth our Lord had a new dwelling in which He could enjoy the peace of a loving hospitality during the course of His apostolic life. Beyond any doubt, the house He chose was Martha's, the fortunate hostess of Christ,[3] as tradition usually calls her. It is under her roof that Saint Luke places the scene recorded by him in the tenth chapter of his Gospel. "One day", he says, "the Lord entered into a certain locality, and a woman named Martha received Him into her house. This woman had a sister, of the name of Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet to hear His words. Martha, however, served Him with much

[1] Raban Maur, *op. cit.*, c. V: "Beatæ Marthæ confœderatus multa dilectione et consanguinitate."

[2] Raban Maur, *op. cit.*, c. XXIX: "There was a sweet and persuasive grace in her words."

[3] "*Hospita Christi.*" — *Martyrologia*, ad 29 Julii.

solicitude. At a given moment she paused to say: 'Lord, hast Thou no care for the indifference with which my sister leaves me alone to serve? Speak to her, therefore, that she help me!' "[1]

Nothing could be more charming than this little picture of the home in which we see the sweet familiarity that prevailed between Jesus and His friends, and, at the same time, the zeal with which these acknowledged the condescension of His presence at their hearth. Their manner of showing it was quite different, but the feeling of both was the same. Martha, the mistress of the house, upon whom the responsibility of the reception devolved, wished that everything should conspire to repair the Master's strength, to give Him rest, to alleviate the fatigues of the morrow. She thought principally of the labours, the weariness, the privations He had just undergone, and no effort appeared to her too great in the accomplishment of her purpose. On the other hand, she was aware that He wished nothing more for Himself than for the disciples who accompanied Him, and who were also friends of the family.[2] Her task, then, was a heavy one, and perhaps she was justified in finding Magdalen a little too eager to sit at those feet which she had already watered with her tears, and which recalled to her such tender memories.[3] Mary, on the contrary, does not wish to leave their divine guest even for

[1] Luke, X, 38—40.
[2] Raban Maur, *op. cit.*, c. X.
[3] Saint Teresa, "*Le Château Intérieur*," c. IV.

a moment, and while her sister is occupied in attending to His wants, she remains near Him, attentive to His words, as if to indulge the heart's expansion, which is the first need of a friend amid friends. The two motives and the two parts are admirable, but which is the better? Jesus Himself will tell us. — "Martha", He says, repeating the name of His hostess with evident affection,[1] — "Martha, you are pre-occupied and troubled about many things. But one thing only is necessary."[2]

He refuses nothing that Martha offers Him, and hence He does not condemn her activity[3]; it is sufficient for Him that He is loved, and this He realises in the welcome He receives. That is all that is necessary, and is not a complete and attentive silence the best means of showing it? His heart, more than all, is hungry and thirsty; His heart, above all, is weary and broken; His heart, more especially, needs consolation and repose. — No doubt, in taking the form of man He has condescended to require our services and to ask His food of us — since He had a body that needed nourishment. But do you not know that angels served Him in the desert?[4] Not by giving Him bread do you best satisfy His desires. Give Him what the angels cannot offer Him, since they do not possess it, and you are its sole master. Give

[1] "The repetition of the name is a token of affection," says Saint Augustine (*Serm. XXXV, de Verbis Domini*).

[2] Luke, X, 41—42.

[3] S. Ambrose, *Comment. in Luke*, X.

[4] S. Augustine, *loc. cit.*

Him your heart, your love, your silence, as Magdalen has done. "Such is", — He Himself concluded, knowing that Martha would understand Him, — "such is the better part, which is secured for ever to those who have chosen it."[1]

Saint Teresa, with her usual penetration, makes a remark here to which we should not dare to call the reader's attention, had it not been supported by such an authority. "Thinking sometimes, O my God, of Thy gentle reproach to Saint Martha, it seems to me that she complained not only of her sister, but that her greatest displeasure arose from the fact that she was persuaded that Thou didst not sympathise with her in her work, and that Thou hadst no care that she should be near Thee. She imagined perhaps that Thou didst not love her as much as her sister, and this gave her much more trouble than the service she tendered Thee, her love for Thee being such that this service could not be otherwise than most pleasant. This disposition of her mind is shown more clearly in that, without saying a single word to her sister, all her complaint was addressed to Thee; and the ardour of her love gave her the courage to say to Thee that Thou hadst no care that her sister should help her to serve Thee. Thy reply, O Lord, shows

[1] Luke, X, 42. — Cf. S. Teresa, *Exclamations*, V. — In the *Château de l'âme*, c. IV, she adds: "To receive their divine guest in a becoming manner, it was necessary that Martha and Magdalen should unite their efforts; for would it be receiving Him well not to give Him to eat? And who would have given Him to eat, if Martha remained, like Magdalen, seated at His feet?"

that her complaint proceeded from this cause, since Thou didst declare to her that love gives value to everything, and that this one thing necessary of which Thou speakest is to have so great a love for Thee that nothing shall be capable of hindering us from loving Thee."[1]

O holy jealousy, which lessened in no way the sisterly tenderness of Martha's heart, and shows only her desire not to be outdone by her sister in seeking divine Love! To understand this, one should have felt the ardour that consumed these two souls, and enjoyed the sweet intercourse to which they were admitted equally by Jesus-Christ. Both possessed the better part, each in the degree that suited her nature, — and Saint John seems to have wished to act contrary to Saint Luke when he opposes to the words that glorify Magdalen, those which put her sister beyond comparison, in enumerating the Master's friends, among whom Martha holds the first place. "Jesus loved Martha, her sister Mary, and Lazarus."[2]

Whatever we may hold on this point, it is impossible not to believe in His preference for this early friendship, for this virginal purity which He recognises as His own distinctive characteristic, for this unchanging devotion; above all, for this faith unsurpassed in its intensity and spontaneity, save by that of Peter himself. In any case, Martha

[1] S. Teresa, *Exclamations*, V.

[2] John, XI, 5: "Diligebat autem Jesus Martham, et sororem ejus Mariam, et Lazarum." — Cf. Giry, *Vie des Saints*, 29 July.

had been loved the longest, and we shall soon see that at her death she was the object of a tenderness beyond all comparison. But without waiting this last day the Master gave her a singular proof of His friendship, at the resurrection of Lazarus.

Summoned by the sisters of the dying man, in terms of unmeasured confidence — "He whom Thou lovest is sick" — He came slowly, the better to show His friendship and His power. For four days the dead man had slept in his tomb, when Jesus mounted the rugged steps of Ain el Haoudh and appeared on the plateau that overhangs Bethany. His slowness, though surprising to Martha, could not altogether discourage her; she was sure of His coming, and watched so that she might run to meet Him. As soon as she was apprised of His arrival, she hastened to Him, and perceiving Him seated on a stone[1] at some distance, she cast herself before Him saying, "Lord if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died!" It was a gentle reproach to the divine Friend for not having been there, when they had had so much need of His presence; but as if she feared to appear to doubt Him, whose power and kindness she knew so well, she added quickly: "However, now even, I know that whatever Thou wilt ask of God, He will give it Thee."

Martha's personality is pictured in these words, — her natural impetuosity, her restless love and

[1] This stone, known as the *Stone of Conference*, may still be seen on the rising ground a short distance from Bethany. It is a compound of flint and limestone, one metre long and fifty centimetres broad. (V. Liévin, Guide, t. II.)

her absolute confidence. We are not surprised at her complaint, and we cannot admire too much the simplicity of the faith which prompts her to address so direct and plain an appeal to the Son of God. She believes that all is possible to Him, and confides herself so entirely to Him that she does not even trouble to state exactly what she desires. Jesus understands her well. — "Your brother shall rise again." The certainty that she feels of being heard prevents for a moment her understanding that her petition has been at once granted. "I know", she says, "that he will rise again at the last day." Then, with a voice whose accent was beyond the power of human speech, Jesus gave her this beautiful lesson, in which we discover a reproach for her hesitation:— "I am the resurrection and the life. He that believeth in Me, although he be dead, shall live: and everyone that liveth, and believeth in Me, shall not die for ever. Believest thou this?" That is to say; I have not to ask, nor to await, the power to raise the dead, for I am the resurrection as well as the life. Faith in Me triumphs over death, by the resurrection of the flesh, and the immortality of the soul. Your brother has believed in Me; he has not then to fear eternal death, and in this transient dissolution he still preserves the immediate pledge of his resurrection. Believest thou this?[1]

[1] Cf. Raban Maur, *op. cit.*, c. XIV. — Id., *Comment. in Matth.*, lib. III, c. 9: "Knowing her faith, He interrogates her, that her profession may manifest her faith, and that grace may follow her profession, and that salvation may accompany grace."

Through her tears Martha saw the smile, divined the promise, and in a transport of ecstasy cried out: "O yes, Lord, I have believed that Thou art Christ the Son of the living God, who art come into this world!"

Never has faith elicited a more sublime and triumphant declaration. Martha had no need to add to it; Lazarus was about to rise from his tomb. But it was pleasing to the Master to point out in her the emotions of a loving heart similar to our own, so often struggling between the feeling of a painful reality and the hope of a consolation that God alone can give. Saint Bernard says that Mary herself felt these emotions at the tomb of her Son. Did she not know that He must die? She had never doubted it. Yet, nevertheless, she wept over the Crucified. Yes, bitterly! . . . He who is surprised at it forgets the severe reproach of Paul to the Gentiles, that they were without affection. The heart of Mary could not deserve that reproach: the hearts of her children, likewise, should not merit it.[1]

Magdalen was constrained to repeat the words of Martha—"Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died!" But we may say that if the confidence of her love dispensed her from adding aught else, it was because she knew of the protestation made by her sister, and knew also beforehand that Jesus had granted their request. Tears flowed from the Master's eyes at the sight of those in

[1] S. Bernard, *Serm. Dom. infra Oct. Assumpt. B. Mariæ*, cit. Rom., I, 31.

Magdalen's: a smile brightened His countenance in listening to the declaration of Martha. The Friend had perhaps given more to the first: it was the second who called into action the omnipotence of God.[1] Seeing him weep, the Jews said among themselves, "See how He loved Lazarus," but they did not seem to think that He could raise him to life — on the contrary, they added ironically, "How is it that He who opened the eyes of the man born blind could not have prevented the death of this man?" His ringing voice answered in reply "Take away the stone."

At the thought of the corpse that was to be revealed, and of the effect which its appearance should have upon her Friend, already so deeply moved, Martha forgot all, even her hopes, in thinking only of Jesus. "Lord," she murmured in suppressed tones, "by this time he stinketh, for he has been dead four days." But the Man had disappeared: the God shone in all His splendour, and with a voice whose authority was scarcely tempered by its sweetness, He said — "Did I not say to thee that if thou wilt believe, thou shalt see the glory of God?"

Then the multitude understood; they took away the stone, and Jesus after having eloquently adjured His Father, issued His omnipotent command — "Lazarus, come forth!" And he who had been dead appeared, his hands and feet bound with bandages, the shroud rolled around his face. "Loose

[1] Cf. Giry, *Vie des Saints*, 29 July.

him and let him go," concluded Jesus, withdrawing to escape their gratitude and admiration.[1]

"I do not know," says Père Lacordaire, "what others think; for myself, were there no other page but this in the Gospel, I should believe in the divinity of Jesus Christ. In vain have I recalled all that I have read; I know nothing that bears a stronger impress of truth. There is not a word in it that does not bring to the heart of man this conviction, that God alone can act thus or inspire such language.—As an incident of friendship it is unparalleled in any age or in any tongue. This narrative overflows with tenderness, yet one cannot say that it is expressed. It lies concealed in the heart, and while it is always felt, one but hears whispered in the soul—'And Jesus wept.'"[2]

"Reverent tears, of which one cannot speak without weeping," as Raban Maur says,[3] you have flowed at the sight of Magdalen's grief, but you gathered in the eyes of Jesus from the moment when Martha allowed hers to fall when she exclaimed: "Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died!" It was at the voice of Magdalen that Jesus ordered the stone of the sepulchre to be removed, but He had already, as He Himself reminds us, promised to the faith of Martha that she should see the glory of God.

After the resurrection of Lazarus, Martha does not appear more than once in the Gospel narrative;

[1] John, XI, 1–45.

[2] Lacordaire, *Sainte Marie-Madeleine*, c. II.

[3] *Op. cit.* c. XV.

on the night of the repast in the house of Simon the Leper, five days before the betrayal of Judas.[1] The Apostles had been invited, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem had also come to see Lazarus, who sat at table with them. In Simon's house Martha continued the usual ministrations which constitute her glory, in giving her as a model to all those who would honour Jesus in His suffering and humble children. Without any jealousy on this occasion she surrenders the prominent place to her sister, who on this day anoints the Master's head for His death and burial, according to His own words. Doubtless she was hurt by the murmurs of the disciples, and must have resisted with difficulty her desire to silence Judas; but she was well avenged by the eulogium that Jesus deigned to pronounce on Magdalen,[2] and by the consciousness that she shared the immortality promised to her sister. Wherever the Gospel shall be preached, it shall be in memory of the double service rendered on that day to the Son of God about to die. The last tokens of affections that He received in His mortal life were given to Him by these two noble women, who consoled His heart by their humble and chaste affection.

Tradition has taken upon itself to supplement the silence of the Gospel, in showing us Martha by the side of Mary during the ascent of Calvary and at the foot of the Cross. It would have been

[1] Matth. XXVI, 6 and following. — John XII, 2 and following.

[2] John XII, 2.

rather surprising had she not been among the foremost in these sad scenes; she, to whom Jesus had so often given the first place in His hours of joy. The belief of the early Christians regarding her is also unanimous on this point, as on that of the presence of Martha at the sepulchre with the other holy women, on the morning of the Resurrection. The distinctness and constancy of these traditions have so impressed Baronius, that he has not hesitated to give them a place in his Annals.[1] The silence of the Gospel, Saint Anselm says, cannot be pleaded as an objection, for the sacred book contains nothing that is useless, and what could be more superfluous than to point out the fidelity of Martha or the tenderness of Jesus in circumstances where they must perforce shine with the greatest brilliancy and clearness?

Ancient writers tell us that Magdalen and Martha had brought from Palestine two cherished souvenirs of the Passion; Magdalen, a little earth red with the Precious Blood gathered at the foot of the cross, — Martha, a history of the Master's

[1] Baronius, *Annals* of the year 34, no. 182: "Therefore all these as they had been together on Calvary during the Passion of our Lord, hastened to the sepulchre, inspired by the same office of piety." — He gives proof of it, — "ex majorum traditione," — the following anthem borrowed from the *Ordo Romanus:* "Mary and Martha, when they were come to the sepulchre, angels clad in light appeared to them and said: whom seek ye? — the living among the dead?" — Cf. Severian. episcop. Gabalor. (*De creatione mundi*, p. I., 271 Biblioth. patr. graec:) "Martha and Mary see Him, recognise Him, and bend the knee before Him." — Cath. Emmer. (Douloureuse Passion, c. XXIX, etc.) echoes these traditions, by which the artists of the middle ages were also inspired.

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sufferings, written in Hebrew. Neither one nor the other would wish that the drama of Golgotha, in which they had taken so prominent a part, should cease to be ever-present to their thoughts.

After the Ascension Magdalen seemed to desire to exclude all other memories from her mind, and retired, it is said, into the sepulchre where Lazarus had been laid, to live there alone, having communication only with her sister, who provided for her wants. Martha, on the contrary, multiplied her works of zeal in the service of the Blessed Virgin,[1] by care of the poor and organizing the churches at Bethany, where the Apostles had consecrated the houses sanctified by the Saviour's presence. Thus passed the twelve years following the descent of the Holy Ghost, and the inauguration of the kingdom of God upon earth; a period full of wonders and consolations, but also of sorrows and perils, which are recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. After the example of Barnabas, soon followed by the greater number of the disciples, Martha placed her fortune at the disposal of Peter,[2] and became, quite naturally, a help to the deacons in the distribution of alms[3] under the direction of Stephen. Parmenas had received from the prince of the Apostles the special mission of directing Martha in practices of charity, or rather she herself had asked his assistance, which was faithfully given to the last day of her life.[4] The death of

[1] Raban Maur, *op. cit.* c. XXXIV and XXXV.
[2] Act. Apost. IV, 34–37.—Raban Maur, *op. cit.* c. XXXIV.
[3] Act. Apost., VI, 1–6.
[4] Raban Maur, *op. cit.*, c. XXXVI and XLVIII.

Stephen and the persecution of which it was the signal, brought about a momentary separation between Lazarus and his sisters. They lived at Jerusalem, if we may believe Raban Maur,[1] while he sought refuge in Galilee whence he was soon to depart for the island of Cyprus. Their re-union came about as we have seen, at Joppa in the year 42, the date of the definite dispersion of the first disciples of Jesus.

At Marseilles, Martha was the first and most ardent apostle of the Gospel. Tradition has retained the memory of her preaching, in which her natural eloquence found free scope and produced the most admirable results. Combining a love of solitude and prayer with zeal for souls, she portioned her time between the town, where she proclaimed Jesus-Christ, and the country, where she gathered around her those souls desirous of contemplation and renunciation of the world. Her name is still linked to one of the neighbouring localities of Marseilles which she seems to have particularly loved, doubtless because of the charm of the landscape, the gentle manners of the people, and the peace which the smallness of their numbers allowed her.[2] Magdalen at first lived here with her sister; then aspiring to a more complete separation, she put

[1] Raban Maur, *op. cit.*, c. XXXIV, cit. Act. Apost. VIII, 1.

[2] *Sainte-Marthe*, a little to the north of Marseilles, the first station on the railway from Aix. The *Chemin de Sainte-Marthe* puts the *Belle de Mai* and Saint-Barthélemy in communication with each other. To the west runs the rivulet of the *Aygalades*, on the banks of which Martha and Magdalen lived: it falls into the basin of the Arenc.

between herself and the world the almost insurmountable barrier of the forest and rocks of Sainte-Baume. It was not long, however, before Martha left the sea coast, to ascend by the course of the Rhone, and carry the light of the faith to the great city of Avignon.

It was a magnificent conquest to undertake. Founded by the Phoenicians on the left bank of the Rhone nearly six hundred years before Christ,[1] Avignon had long been the capital of the Cavares, then had become one of the most important military and commercial stations of Narbonnaise Gaul. All the activity and all the luxury of the great cities of the Roman empire had there full sway, scarcely yielding in importance to Marseilles and Narbonne. Proudly seated at the base of the rock of the Doms, it seemed already to anticipate that it should one day rob its neighbour, Arles, of the title of *The Rome of the Gauls*.[2] It had retained, however, a little more than its rivals, the Celtic features whose mixture with Greek and Roman elements conferred a distinctive characteristic that is still recognised at the present day. The Roman roads of the south joined here the principal route which, ascending the valley of the Rhone, placed the ports of the Mediterranean in communication with the central regions, across the countries of the Arverni and Allobroges, where the ancient spirit of the Gauls still survived. Avignon was, then, one of those frontier posts where one encountered

[1] In the year 539.

[2] "Arelas Romula Galliarum."

civilization and barbarism, the present and the future, with all the facilities that could be given to preaching by the habit of thought or the curiosity of intellectual initiative.

A divine inspiration urged Martha towards these people seated in the shadow of death. She set out in company with Parmenas, Germanus, Marcellus, Evodius, and Synthex. Leaving the Tarascon coast, whither she proposed to return, she went directly to the great city, the true scene of her apostolic ministry.[1] Her burning words soon moved all hearts. The people followed her footsteps, enchanted and subjugated, but withal frivolous to excess, and disappearing suddenly when they seemed within grasp: here were found indeed the sons of sceptic and degenerate Greece, or the enthusiastic and mercurial Gaul. Her words inebriated them as a strong and scented wine, but the intoxication once over, there remained only dejection and ennui. Happily, Martha had at her disposal the power of God, and a miracle achieved what her words had but begun.[2]

One day on the strand, the multitude was gathered around the virgin, absorbed in listening to the sweet tones of her voice, when a low cry broke the silence. A young man was seen trying to swim from the opposite shore, hoping to reach the bank to which he was attracted by the same impulse that had brought all these people together; but his strength deceived him, the river swept

[1] Raban Maur, *op. cit.*, c. XXXVIII.

[2] Id., *op. cit.* c. XXXIX.

him along, and he soon disappeared beneath the rushing waters. The following day, at the ninth hour, that is at noon, the body was recovered in the fishermen's nets and carried to the oratory of the Saint with passionate supplications. The rich joined their prayers with those of the people to obtain the resurrection of the poor man. Then Martha said: "If you see this young man restored to life in the name of the Lord Jesus-Christ, will you believe what I preach to you?" — "Yes," replied the crowd with enthusiasm, "we will believe that your Lord is truly the Son of God, God Himself, and that you are his chosen apostle!" — "Then, young man," commanded the wonder-worker, "in the name of Our Lord Jesus-Christ, arise and give testimony of the great things that His mercy has accomplished in your favour!" And the young man, standing erect, began to confess Jesus-Christ and asked to be baptised, amid the acclamations of the people, who testified their faith in the God of the strange woman, now become their mother in the supernatural life.[1]

Conversions multiplied, and Parmenas was not able to baptise all the new Christians, whose eagerness also troubled Martha's peace. She sought to escape, at least from time to time, from this ministry in which she sometimes found again the anxieties and cares[2] of Bethany. The deserts that separated Avignon from Tarascon afforded the

[1] Raban Maur, *op. cit.*, c. XLII; — Bolland., *Acta.* SS., 29 July.

[2] Luke, X, 41: "Martha, sollicita es et turbaris."

refuge she desired, but not for long; her zeal could not resist the call of souls nor their persistent search for her. Thus she evangelized all this land even to Beaucaire and Arles, where she helped Bishop Trophimus, as she was soon to help Bishop Maximin in the conquest of Tarascon.

She had found near this latter town a retreat in a cavern hidden on the banks of the Rhone, in the thickest part of the woods that there bordered the river, and that swarmed with reptiles and deer. Two paces from it, a little lower down but on the same shore, a projection of the steep rocky bank served as the den of a monster that spread terror and death all around it. As always happens in such cases, the popular imagination exaggerated its height, its strength, and its ferocity.[1] "It was of incredible proportions," says Raban Maur, "and of gigantic stature. The pestilential exhalations from its mouth, the lightning flashes of its eyes, the gnashing of its teeth, and the bellowings of its throat filled all who saw it with consternation. Woe to him who fell under its teeth and between its claws! Even by approaching it one might die from its fetid breath. The numbers of animals and men that it had either devoured or strangled could scarcely be counted."[2] James of Voragine

[1] Sometimes it is said that it had wings We take no notice of this, because the various seals of Tarascon and the most ancient monuments do not attribute them to the Provençal monster. The "draco" of Raban Maur and of James of Voragine does not necessarily imply wings: it designates rather a reptile.

[2] Raban Maur, *op cit.* c. XL.

enlarges still further upon the horrible deformity of the animal, "half fish, half dragon, larger than a whale, longer than a horse, with teeth like pointed swords, covered with thick scales, devouring flocks and overturning the boats that ventured upon the river."[1]

The middle ages have left us a picture of this ferocious beast, restored to a more credible form, although even this falls far short of the reality, — and has given to it the name of griffin,[2] — a semi-fabulous beast, even to the mind of the author who describes it, and who appears to have never seen its scientific type. It is evidently the crocodile, such as is depicted on the Roman medals of the Nemausien colony, with its invulnerable armour, its jaws furnished with sharp-edged teeth, its almost human feet, its tail capable of upsetting a boat or breaking the limbs of a man. If one calls to mind the fetid odour, the hoarse bellowings, the keen and blood-thirsty looks of the formidable saurian, crocodile, gavial, alligator, — it is not difficult to recognise the Tarascon beast crouching among the reeds, bounding upon all that ventures within reach of its lair, and swallowing up in its immense jaws either a shepherd or a sheep.[3]

Whence came it? James of Voragine, who calls it a marine reptile, the offspring of Leviathan,[4]

[1] Jacob. Vorag., *Legenda aurea* (De S. Martha).

[2] *Le bestiare d'amour*, with wood engravings of the sixteenth century.

[3] "Oves perimebat." — "Pecora et pastores."

[4] "Venerat per mare . . . generatum a Leviathan." (*De S. Martha.*)

would designate it as some Ichthyosaurus descended from primeval ages, caught in the waters of the Rhone, if the giant of the Jurassic period was amphibious and not exclusively aquatic. The nails[1] with which Raban Maur furnishes it, and the rapidity of movement attributed to it by local tradition, would seem to convey the idea of the Teleosaurus, a monster of the same epoch, that resembled anatomically the present gavial of India frequenting stagnant pools and even the sea, — with a height that reached ten metres, a head of three or four metres cleft by a mouth of two, — lank, agile, armed with a cuirass on all sides,[2] — capable of devouring not only a man but an ox.[3] Without always adhering to these inadmissible sources of origin, may we not believe it to have been some representative of an extant species, the survival of a former race habituated to the Rhone and by degrees exterminated by man. It is objected that the crocodile was a familiar object along the banks of the Rhone and that the inhabitants could not be completely mistaken as to its form, nor startled beyond measure by its ferocity, against which they were always prepared to defend themselves. But the monster might have reappeared after a sufficiently long interval to allow its nature and form to be forgotten, and the habit of precaution

[1] "Ungulis et dente dilanians." (*Op. cit.*, c. XL.)

[2] "Binis parmis ex utraque parte munitus."

[3] *La terre avant le déluge*, p. 178. — One may still encounter the Tarasque of the *Belodon Kapffii*, a gigantic Saurian proceeding from the archegosaurus, the prototype of the lizard, according to some authorities.

to be lost. The various dissensions that had unsettled this country from the Rhone to the Var, may also have depopulated, for the time being, the river banks, and may have allowed the beast, forced to take refuge in the swamps of the Camargue, to reappear, after a long time, and the men driven from their dwellings by the Teuton hordes, the armies of Caesar, or the partisans of the last triumvirs, to return. And, in fact, the boatmen and fishermen who navigated open boats or wherries in those places, were nothing more than the shepherds of the Crau or the labourers of Trebon, bound to rid themselves of such an enemy. It is also easily conceivable that there was widespread terror and universal discouragement from Avignon to Arles, when Martha came to settle at Tarascon.

One day, when she was preaching, the audience asked her, in proof of the power of her Master, to deliver them from the monster. "If you are disposed to believe," she replied, "all is possible to faith."[1] All promised immediately to believe in Jesus-Christ, and Martha, with a little bronze cross in her hand,[2] approached the ferocious beast, and suddenly tamed his fury by showing him the sign of redemption. Then she made a collar of her own girdle, with which she led him to the

[1] Mark, IX, 22: "Omnia possibilia sunt credenti."

[2] This cross of "copper" was preserved in the treasury of the church of Tarascon until the Revolution: it had a double cross-bar, like the so-called cross of the Holy-Sepulchre or of Saint-James.

shore in sight of the multitude, who were at first afraid of his presence, then became reassured by the reproof of the Saint. "How is it," she said to them, "that you fear? You see that I hold the reptile prisoner:[1] approach with courage, in the name of the Lord your Saviour, and kill the monster." She had some trouble in convincing them, and according to Raban Maur, she fully justified her name as Martha, — the instigator,[2] — in inducing them to kill the odious beast, which perhaps, like the people on the shores of the Nile, they imagined to be a divinity whose ulterior vengeance they feared. But while striking it with trembling hands, they admired the unshaken courage of the virgin who held it with so fragile a bond, without appearing in the least concerned at the convulsions of its agony. Then, as is always the case, a delirium of joy succeeded the delirium of fear: Martha became to them a divinity, Diana the huntress or Minerva the wise and strong,[3] — to whom they should offer sacrifice. Paul and Barnabas had not more trouble at Lystra[4] in bringing their audience to a proper understanding of the situation. Calm ensued at last, and the whole province was soon in subjection to Christ, led by

[1] "Ecce serpentem teneo." (*Raban Maur, op. cit.*, c. XL.) — The Tarasque is also styled a *serpent* in the ancient prose writings of Saint Martha. *Mistral* (Mireio, c. XI) calls it also a snake.

[2] "Ad feriendum constanter *provocans*,"

[3] Mistral (Mireio, c. XI) recalls this local tradition in charming verse.

[4] Act. Apost., XIV, 7–17.

the example of the people of Tarascon, full of veneration and love for their deliverer.[1]

Through all ages, and in spite of all agitations, this gratitude has continued to manifest itself under whatever form best coincides with the poetic imagination of the Provençals. Every year, on Saint Martha's feast, crowds gather in the streets of Tarascon to see the procession of La Tarasque. A monster of wicker-work and pasteboard, into whose mouth a child disappears, and a blow of whose tail is something to be feared, — traverses the streets of the city, carried by active and vigorous young men who cause his rapid and irregular movements. The beast seems sometimes to hurl himself upon the spectators, as if threatening to devour them, amidst the piercing plaudits of the women and the chivalrous acclamations of the men. A young girl, clothed in a robe of blue satin and veiled in crimson gauze, leads the Tarasque with a silken girdle, and tames his anger now and again by sprinkling him with holy water.[2] An armed band closes the procession, in order to represent the multitude that kills and dismembers the vanquished monster.

The reader will perhaps be surprised that we have given to the Tarasque the character of a real

[1] Raban wrongly maintains that Tarascon derives it name from the Tarasque; *Strabo* et *Ptolomy* long before this period designated it so. The place rather, gave its name to the beast.

[2] Tradition would have us believe that Martha treated the Tarasque in the same manner. This is why she is represented holding an asperges-pot and brush in her hands.

and definite monster, in place of regarding it only as a symbol of paganism or of the demon overthrown by the Gospel. The allegorical interpretations in which people now seem to delight so as not to offend certain others, seem to us little worthy of acceptance, from whatever point of view we may regard them, and especially from the standpoint of historical science. Monsters were not uncommon at the time of the first preachings of the Gospel in France, Ireland, or Germany, whose woods and marshes were admirably adapted for their haunts. Even in our own time the forests and swamps of South America or Central Africa afford examples that coincide with those which we find in Western legends. One may say the same of the Indian jungles and the deserted tracts of the United States, where serpents and gigantic saurians abound. More familiar with the thought and sight of them, we no longer fear them so much, and moreover, we regard the contests against them in which men now engage, as something heroic, at least under certain conditions; and in such an event we believe we owe to our deliverer a country's gratitude, such as the Hindoo renders to the lucky slayer of a man-eater.

The Apostles of the Gospel, fulfilling the Master's promise,[1] tamed ferocious beasts as a guarantee of their mission. That they often did so, one can only conclude that occasion often arose for their so doing; in this there is nothing surpris-

[1] Mark, XVI, 18; — Luke, X, 19.

ing for any reader who is familiar with the foundations of national history.

It is said of such monsters as the Tarasque that: "Their description does not represent any known animal."[1] We must understand one another. Such a description as popular imagination has produced is evidently inapplicable to any definite species; but with a little reflection and the help of monuments relating to the subject, it is rectified and adapts itself sufficiently, as we have seen. This is why we discard the allegorical explanation and adhere to historic reality, though always upholding that the victory of Martha over the Tarasque is a faithful symbol of that which she obtained over the cruel and rampant paganism in Narbonnaise Gaul.[2]

After the service she had rendered these people, she could no longer think of leaving them; besides, they kept too close a watch over her to make it possible. So she fixed her dwelling on the borders of the Rhone, in a humble little house that replaced the rustic hut which had hitherto sheltered her. For seven years she lived there alone, but often visited by the poor, whom she took under her care with the same zeal with which she had formerly tended the King of the poor. In her penury she found means of proving herself as liberal as if she still possessed the well-stocked cellars of former

[1] *Sainte Marthe*, by E. de F., p. 134.

[2] Raban Maur speaks always of the Viennoise (c. XL, etc.); but in the time of Saint Martha this part of Gaul was still called Narbonnaise. The other name is of later date.

days, her divine Friend taking pleasure in multiplying her resources according to the measure of her charity.[1] The rich also came to her door to solicit the consolation which she gave them with the same good will and generosity, in raising their souls towards the sovereign dispenser of all good, whose humble representative she was.

For herself, her life was the most mortified, or rather the most superhuman that one can conceive. Clothed in rough material under which she hid a hair- cloth, with bare feet, she preserved from her ancient costume only the white head-dress which was to her a souvenir of her country. Her bed was composed of branches and vine-leaves, with a stone for her pillow and a sort of mat for covering. She eat only fruit and vegetables and drank only water; still she found it sufficient to take this poor refection but once a day. "Her life was a veritable martyrdom," Raban Maur justly says, but it was sweetened by continual ecstasy in which she lived again the old days at Bethany, and seemed already to enter into possession of eternal beatitude.

Meanwhile, the years passed away. Martha's solitude was peopled with numbers of pious women and young girls[2] desirous of sharing her austerities

[1] Raban Maur, *op. cit.* c. XL.

[2] The religious hospitallers of the Holy-Ghost trace back their origin to this gathering of pious women and virgins around Saint Martha. Tradition favours the idea; but positive documents are wanting. The Roman Breviary, however, mentions this community on the 29th of July, and it coincides with a vision of Saint Veronica of Binasco. (V. Bolland., Acta SS ad 13 Jan.)

and prayers, all under the patronage of the Blessed Virgin,[1] and the direction of Parmenas, who remained faithful to the holy client whom Peter had confided to his care. One day, God inspired Maximin, Bishop of Aix, Trophimius, Bishop of Arles, and Eutropus, Bishop of Orange, to come to Tarascon to visit the companion of their exile and apostolate. It was winter, and on the sixteenth day of the calends of January, that is the seventeenth of December, they gave to the community on the banks of the Rhone the church that they needed, by dedicating the house of the foundress solemnly under the name then ordinarily used, of Saint-Saviour. After the ceremony, Martha gave her guests and all who accompanied them, a modest repast, where the miracle of Cana was renewed, in memory of which the Bishops ordered at the recurrence of each New Year, a commemoration of the consecration and the miracle that had followed it.[2]

When leaving, Maximin undertook to convey a request to Magdalen, which indeed she was to grant, but not until after her death: Martha asked her sister to also come and visit her, and the holy penitent bound herself to do so, without foreseeing then in what manner she should fulfil her promise.[3]

[1] Jacob of Vorag. *de Sancta Martha*. — This is a local tradition which seems to us worthy of respect. The same devotion is attributed to S. Trophimius of Arles, who would have built an oratory to Mary in the Alyscamps.

[2] Raban Maur, *op. cit.* c. XLIII. — The feast was celebrated until 1187 at Tarascon: it did not cease to be commemorated at Bethany till the time of the destruction of this church by the Mussulmans.

[3] Raban Maur, *op. cit.* c. XLIV.

Before seeing Magdalen again, Martha was to make some pleasant acquaintances. A persecution in Aquitaine exiled, for a time, from their sees, Frontus, Bishop of Perigueux, and George, Bishop of Velay, who took refuge at Tarascon. They were received with great cordiality, and retained with earnest entreaty as long as possible. At their departure, Martha said to the Bishop of Perigueux: "You know that I shall die next year, and I beg your Lordship to come to my funeral."—"If I see my daughter, that it is the will of God, I promise to assist at it," replied the Bishop simply.

Forthwith, the glorious virgin called all her friends together, and announced to them her approaching departure for heaven: then she laid herself upon her poor bed, attacked by a fever that should never be subdued, and whose consuming fires, while they burned, purified her like gold in the furnace.[1] In proportion as the year advanced, the stronger grew her desire to quit this earth, especially after she had seen the soul of Magdalen pass through the air on its way to glory.—"O most beautiful, most happy, and most beloved sister,"[2] she had exclaimed, "what have you done? Why did you not visit me before your death, as you promised? You will enter, then, without me, into the joy of the Lord Jesus, who had loved us so much in return for our love for Him! I hope to

[1] Sap. III, 6: "Ut aurem in fornaco probatur."

[2] "O pulcherrima, felix et mea dilecta soror, non attendisti quod mihi vovisti ut me visitares." (Brev. Eduens., 1650). — Cf. Rabau Maur, c. XLVI; — Vincent De Beauvais, *Speculum historiale*, etc.

rejoin you soon: while awaiting me live the life of the blessed, and do not forget me."

Joy overflowed her heart, free from all jealousy: she hoped soon to share the lot of her beloved sister, and said so to those around her in words of consolation for the trouble that had overwhelmed them. From that moment they watched over her more assiduously, and with greater solicitude, because they felt that the hour of separation was at hand. Seven days later it came.

It was in the middle of the night. Martha had caused three lamps and seven wax tapers to be lit, which shed a brilliant light around her. Suddenly, a strong wind extinguished them, and the saint, fearing an attack from the spirit of darkness, asked those who watched to relight the lamps. But before they could comply, a heavenly radiance illuminated the house, and Magdalen, her countenance shining like a star, sat by the pillow of the dying woman, whom she greeted affectionately. — "I come," she said, "to fulfil my promise, and to visit you before you leave this life of time. And I do not come alone; for here is your Beloved, the Lord your Saviour, who is there, and who calls you,[1] as He called me at the hour of my death!" The Master, in fact, was standing beside her bed: "It is I," He said with a radiant smile, — "it is I, whom thou hast served with so much zeal during My mortal life, and in My poor, after My ascension into Heaven. It is I, to whom thou hast said: 'I believe that Thou art Christ, the Son of God, who art

[1] John XI, 28: "Magister adest et vocat te."

come into this world!' Come then, leave this exile, and receive thy crown." Then making an effort to rise and follow Him, she heard these words: "Wait yet a little while; I go to prepare thy place. Then I will come to take thee, so that thou shalt be where I Myself am." Then He disappeared with Magdalen, but the brilliant light lasted until the dawn.

At sunrise, the saint requested them to carry her to a neighbouring field, so that the assembled faithful might be enabled to approach her and hear her last instructions. They spread straw and branches under a large tree, covering this bed with a mat, on which they formed a cross of ashes; then they laid the virgin on it, smiling and ever gracious towards those around her. With faltering speech, she begged the help of their prayers to aid her in obtaining a speedy departure. Then, raising her eyes to Heaven, she began to supplicate the Lord Himself, in the name of the hospitality she had shown Him, and the promises He had made her on the preceding night. The angel of death delayed however, in coming, and to mitigate the pain of waiting,[1] Martha begged Parmenas, to read to her the Hebrew narrative of the Passion that she had brought from Palestine.[2] As the mournful

[1] "Ut vel sic suae expectationis taedium temperaret." (Raban Maur, *op. cit.*, c. XLIII).

[2] Some suppose this manuscript to be the Gospel of Saint Luke, because of the fact that Martha died at the moment when Parmenas read the words: "Et clamans voce magna, Jesus ait, etc.," which are in ch. XXIII of this Gospel. However, Saint Luke did not write in Hebrew, and his work

scenes of the Saviour's agony one after another came to her mind, her tears flowed faster, and little by little her soul struggled to depart. When the reader came to the verse: "And Jesus, crying with a loud voice said: "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit," the bosom of the dying woman heaved a deep sigh, her eyes closed gently, and her heart was still for ever. It was on a Friday, the fourth of the calends of August, that is, the twenty-ninth of July, at three o'clock in the afternoon, and the happy friend of Jesus had attained her sixty-fifth year.

Full of sorrow, the companions of Martha embalmed her body, as was the custom of the Jews, and laid it in her house, under the watchful care of Parmenas and Germain, her fellow-workers,—of Sosthenes and Epaphias, who were attached to the person of Trophimius, Bishop of Arles,—of Marcella, her faithful servant,—Evodius and Synthex, her former disciples. For three days, hymns and prayers continued unceasingly around her bier. At night, torch-lights shone in the church, lamps illuminated all the houses, and the country was encircled by numerous fires, around which were grouped the faithful of the surrounding neighbourhood. It seemed as though they were afraid of being surprised by some celestial visit, as had happened recently. But it was during the day, in the broad sunlight, that the predilection of the divine Master for His hostess of Bethany was manifested.

is usually regarded as of later date than the death of Martha and Magdalen.

On Sunday, at the hour of Tierce, the Bishop of Perigueux was seated on his throne in the church, awaiting the moment to begin the holy Sacrifice, when he felt himself overpowered by a mysterious sleep. Scarcely had he closed his eyes, when Christ appeared to him.—"Come, My son," He said.—"fulfil the promise that you have made, to assist at the funeral of Martha, My servant." And all at once, in the midst of those assembled in the church at Tarascon, there appeared two venerable figures. The first, whom many had seen in the preceeding year, took his place at the foot of the coffin; the other, with greater majesty, stood at its head, His eyes fixed upon the pale face of the dead, whom they both raised with tender respect, to place it in the tomb. Those present, Parmenas, Marcella, and the companions of their exile recognized Him, and prostrating themselves, adored Him, their hearts full of joy, and their eyes filled with precious tears — it was the Lord!

One of the assistants, astonished at these silent marks of respect, approached the divine visitor and asked Him who He was, and whence He came? In response, Jesus merely offered him a tablet He held in His hand; then He disappeared. On both sides of the tablet he read the words of the prophet: "She shall be in everlasting remembrance, and shall not be afraid of evil tidings."[1]

At Perigueux, Bishop Frontus continued to sleep on his throne, in sight of the astonished

[1] Ps. CXI, 7: "In memoria aeterna erit (Martha, hospita Christi), ab auditione mala non timebit."—The words in the parenthesis are supplied by Raban Maur, c. XLIX.

people. The archdeacon, after waiting a sufficient time, took upon himself to awake him and tell him that the hour for the holy Sacrifice was past, and that the assistants were fatigued. "Do not be troubled," said the prelate, "and do not regret the delay: I have been transported, — with or without my body God only knows, — to Tarascon, to bury, with the Lord's consent, Martha, His hostess, to whom I had promised to render this honour. Send and get back my ring and my gloves, which I left in the hands of a clerk while I laid the body in the tomb."

We may imagine the general amazement produced by the Bishop's words; but the astonishment was no less great when the archdeacon's messenger returned, bearing the forgotten ring but only one of the gloves, for the Tarascons wished to keep the other in proof of the miracle.[1] They sent at the same time, letters which attested to the people of Perigueux the presence among them of their Bishop, "whom they knew well," and "of another, worthy of all veneration."[2] They recorded also in the letters the incident of the tablet and of the inscriptions thereon, so that the pontiff might be

[1] This glove, preserved in a gilt reliquary till the time of the revolution, might still be seen in 1839 in the house of the curé of Sainte-Marthe. At his death, his heirs mislaid it without being able to discover any trace of it. The use of the ring was general among the Romans and Gauls at this period: that gloves were used at the same period is not surprising, although positive documents are wanting on this subject.

[2] Raban Maur, *op. cit.* c. XLIX: "Et venerabilem cum eorum potifice, quem bene noverant, exequiis ejus (Marthae) interfuisse personam."

informed, if by accident he had not learnt it when with them.

No one will deny that these are strange facts, and one can understand how they have given rise to many doubts. But besides not exceeding the power of God, and admirably befitting the Master's affection for one of His faithful servants, they are confirmed by circumstances which no longer allow us to reject them. Two peoples, — not only two individuals, worthy of credence as they might be, —two peoples saw, under the most favourable conditions, what the chroniclers have recorded, whose testimonies go back far enough to connect them with those of contemporary eye-witnesses.[1] The tradition regarding these wonders has come down to us without alteration, as the ancient liturgies of Arles, Marseilles, Perigueux, Lyons, Orleans, and Tours prove, which have their complement in more recently accredited liturgies, that of the Order of Saint Dominic, for example,[2] where the smallest details of the original narrative were found, before the attacks of Launoy against the apostolic foundations of the Gauls. As a consequence of these attacks, unjustifiable interpolations discredited the character of our liturgical books; but modern research tends more and more to re-establish the text of these hallowed hymns and traditional lessons.

[1] It is now admitted that Raban Maur, in the ninth century, examined documents of the sixth or the eighth, which were themselves inspired by writings attributed, with probability, to contemporaries of Saint Martha, altered perhaps by arrangements and translations, but worthy of serious attention.

[2] *Breviar. Ord. Praed.*, ad 29 July, lect. III. — Cf. E. de F., *Hist. de Sainte Marthe*, etc.

We have no longer, thank God, the horror of the supernatural and the marvellous that distinguished the biographers of the last century, and we no longer reproach Jesus Christ for His preference for our country. We have no hesitation, then, in giving the narrative of this funeral, that our ancestors believed to have been celebrated by her friend on earth, Frontus, Bishop of Perigueux, and her Friend in Heaven, the Son of God made man, Martha's guest at Bethany, — and which the Roman bas-relief and gothic sarcophagus that may be seen in the basilica at Tarascon, represent.[1]

When the last honours had been rendered to their holy friend, the companions of her exile separated. Epaphras and Marcella returned to Palestine and continued to preach there; Synthex went to die a holy death at Philippia, and Raban Maur believes that Saint Paul names him with Evodius, in his epistle to the people of that town.[2] It seems that Germain accompanied him and joined Clement, another fellow-worker with the Apostle:[3] Parmenas ended his life there by a glorious martyrdom. Marcella, alone, was destined to return

[1] The bas-relief is seen on the left side of the portico of the basilica: the sarcophagus is preserved in the subterranean church. In the first of these monuments we recognise Our Lord by the cruciform nimbus; in the second by the book which He holds in His hand (the *tablet* or *codex* of Raban Maur).

[2] Philipp., IV, 2: "Evodiam rogo et Syntichem deprecor idipsum sapere in Domino."

[3] Id., *ibid.*, 31: "Cum Clemente et caeteris adjutoribus meis."

to Provence, where her tomb is still an object of public veneration. [1]

However, Martha did not remain in solitude: the people continued to gather round her tomb, and kings mingled with beggars, pontiffs with the humblest faithful, — all equally transported with love and gratitude for the benefits conferred upon them by the saintly hostess of the Lord. Through many vicissitudes, which have so often changed the face of the earth and the minds of men, this devotion continued, victorious even over the barbarities that tried to stifle it, from the persecutions of the early centuries down to those of the eighteenth. In her tomb, which has been several times renewed by the piety of our fathers, she, to whom Jesus-Christ said one day: *Sollicita es et turbaris*, is no longer troubled. In memory of this celebrated sentence the artist has engraved these words: *Sollicita non turbatur*; [2] earthly anxiety is lost in the silence of the tomb. Peaceful in eternal glory, Martha sees the blessing of God continually bestowed upon her adopted people, upon the land of France protected by her hallowed remains. Her veneration is restored with honour; the learned who repudiated the remembrance of her apostolate employ their old days in seeking traces of it, and the story of her miracles reanimates faith in Jesus

[1] A *Life of Saint Martha* is attributed to her, interpolated by a forger of the supposititious name of Synthex.

[2] "She who was formerly so solicitous shall be no longer troubled."

Christ, in whose name she sowed so laboriously on earth the seeds that fructify afresh under our eyes.[1]

For us who have tried to revive her characteristics in the memory of our contemporaries, may we lay at her feet a homage that will please her, and merit for us her favour, echoing the wish so well expressed in the old liturgical hymn:

"Hail, O glorious Martha, light of Heaven, flower of the world, hostess of the Saviour! Thou whom we take for our lady and sovereign, obtain for us the pardon of our sins, and secure the grace of God for those who venerate thy memory. When we are in the agonies of death, deign to pray for us, sinners; and, our life here ended, conduct us without delay to eternal glory."[2]

[1] E. de F., *Hist. de Sainte Marthe*, p. 232.

[2] Ave, Martha gloriosa
Coeli jubar, mundi rosa
Salvatoris hospita!
Ora pro nobis, Domina
Per te nostra peccamina
Deleantur.
Impetra, Martha, gratiam
His qui tuam memoriam
Venerantur.
In augusta mortis hora,
Nobis, si placet, implora
Peccatorum veniam;
Cursuque vitae completo,
Ducas nos tramite recto
Ad supernam gloriam.
(Missal. Massil. et Arelat 1530).

Chapter III.

Mary Magdalen.

> "Jesus saith to her: Mary. She, turning, saith to Him: Rabboni (that is to say, Master)."

Among those friendships that we love to verify in the Master's life, did that which He condescended to bestow on Magdalen hold in reality the first place, or was it only second to that which He showed His Apostles, particularly Peter and the sons of Zebedee? An answer to this question is by no means easy, or rather, it is impossible, because these affections are absolutely different in their nature, and their intrinsic dignity does not permit us to define their relative intensity. But in whatever measure we may extend the one and the other, we are compelled to recognise, — without fear of contradiction, — that Magdalen occupied a place in the heart of Jesus, which astonishes while it delights us.

So much mercy and tenderness confounds us, yet we feel that it should be so, since the divine Word became Man to draw sinners to Himself, subjugating them by the charm of His grace, and uniting them more closely to His heart, as the witness *par excellence* of His victory over sin. By incarnating, so to speak, weakness and disorder, Magdalen was predestined to show, in her conversion, all the ingenuity of love in quest of souls,

and after her return to God, all the happiness of the union re-established between the prodigal son and the Father to whom he is restored.

The Master was kind to all sinners, and several of those whom He converted became His companions, such as Matthew, Zacheus, and Cedonius,[1] to mention only those best known. But for these, if we are to judge by the Gospel, He showed no special tenderness; their part was that of the other disciples, without any of the affection that gave such prominence to Simon and the sons of Salome. Why then did Magdalen enjoy a privilege denied to others, who appear to have merited as much as she? It was because an abyss separated Magdalen from the other converts of the Saviour. Her fall had been more deplorable, her dishonour more profound, her conversion more marvellous. The more she had been influenced by evil, the more happy should be the results of her repentance; and this soul seems, as it were, a prey over which heaven and hell disputed with equal ardour. Her conquest cost more, consequently brought more glory and caused more joy to Him who had won her: and since things are valued in our eyes by the price which has been paid for them, — above all if the price is that of our tears and our blood, — what soul could be of greater value in the eyes of the Master?

The publicans called to follow Jesus had not given the scandals with which Magdalen had bur-

[1] According to tradition, the man born blind. (John, IX, 1-41.

dened her conscience: they never became corruptors, though they had trampled under foot the most sacred laws, — and if their name was too well known in the city, there was attached to it no infamy comparable to that with which Magdalen had covered hers. But on the other hand, if we must say all, even in her perversity she had an excuse that the disciples cannot allege: the weakness of an orphan too soon deprived of her mother, — of a virgin too soon thrown into contact with the world, — of a wife badly mated and thus driven to licentiousness,[1] — of a woman abandoned to all seductions, so that in the end she was forced to revolt and resistance, by a despair that was the inevitable result of her errors.

All ruin is sad to contemplate, especially in the moral order; but how much more the ruin of what is most perfect, that is to say, of a being endowed with gifts that charm the eye and delight the mind, — beauty, candour, intelligence, — with the inexpressible fascination of youth in its first exuberance! What pity arises in a generous heart at the sight of these flowers, destined only, it would seem, to bloom upon the altar, but trampled beneath the feet of indifferent and scornful passers! A pity

[1] Stengeil (S. Mariae Magdalenae Vitae Historia, c. I) believes that she did not fall into sin until after the death of her husband: he does not agree with the Talmudical tradition but rather inclines towards a supposititious commentary of Saint Jerome on Saint Mark XV, 40. — Some authors conciliate all opinions by affirming that Magdalen, having sinned before the death of her husband, was no less culpable after her widowhood.

still more profound is excited at the thought of what the evil spirit effects, in dragging souls down to the abyss whither he himself has fallen from Heaven. Alas! he has lost nothing of the power he once possessed to dazzle the eye and corrupt the heart: how many have been consumed in the perfidious rays that dart from his brow despoiled of honour, but not of proud and enchanting beauty! Milton has aptly portrayed Lucifer for us in the alluring seduction of his fall,[1] and Père Lacordaire had good reason to forewarn youth against what he dared to call "the ineffable beauty of sin."[2] How easy it is to understand the emotions of a great heart over such a ruin! An emotion of pity, of devotedness, of sacrifice, whose motive is to save this soul, that is, "to give it, were it even at the price of itself, truth in faith, virtue in grace, peace in redemption, God, in short, — God known, God loved, God served."[3] And then, "when one has been to a poor fallen creature, the instrument of light that reveals her degradation and that raises her up, this sublime release from a death that must have been eternal, inspires sometimes in the two souls an indefinable attraction born of happiness given and of happiness received. And if natural sympathy is added to this emotion which comes from on high, there arises from all these divine gifts bestowed upon the same hearts, an attachment which would have no name upon earth, if Jesus-

[1] Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Book I.
[2] Lacordaire, *Conférence aux Novices de Saint-Maximin*.
[3] Lacordaire, Sainte Madeleine, c. I.

Christ Himself had not said to His disciples: "I have called you My friends." . . . "It is friendship, such as the Man-God who died for His friends could conceive it." . . .[1] Yes, it is friendship, but with the hue of preference that is supposed in the ransom of a most precious and needy soul, which when completely won — to again quote Lacordaire — is in this world "the summit of human and divine affection. Nothing had prepared the world for it, and the world shall never see but its obscure image in the most holy and most heavenly friendships."

The place where this superhuman affection began is the sweetest and most pleasing on earth, the western shore of the Lake of Genezareth, where Eastern imagination still loves to locate the Garden of Eden. At the point where the lake is widest, and at an almost equal distance from its two extremities, a miserable village preserves by its name *Midjdel*, the remembrance of the voluptuous Magdala, cursed by the Talmud,[2] and which the Gospel might have given over, with Bethsaida and Corozain, to the lot of Sodom and Gomorrha.[3] Though less important than Tiberias and Capharnaum, Magdala was more charming. Situated at the entrance of the Ouady-el-Hammâm,[4] under the shadow of Mount Arbela,[5] its feet in the lake, fac-

[1] Lacordaire, *loc. cit.*

[2] *Echah Rabbathi*, fol. 71, 4, and *Taamit Hieros* fol. 69, 1: "Quare desolata est Magdala? Propter scortationem."

[3] Matth., XI, 21; — Luke, X, 12, and following.

[4] "The valley of the doves."

[5] Now called *Irbid*.

ing the rising sun, it seemed a suitable setting for the foolish life led by this Magdalen who owes her name to it, and to whom it, in turn, owes its place in history.

According to tradition, Mary, the younger sister of Martha, was born at Magdala, half town and half fortified castle,[1] whence she had taken the name by which she is known in the Gospel narrative. She was several years younger than her sister, and notwithstanding certain similarities, her character was very different: in proportion as the elder sister appears to us grave, almost austere in her person and life, in the same measure the younger gives us the idea of a nature altogether superficial, impulsive and passionate, prone to extravagance, and regardless of opinion and conventionalities where obstacles apposed the gratification of her whims. Educated somewhat after the Greek fashion, as we may conclude from the documents which contain the history of her early days,[2] she must have been but an ill-suited wife to the petty and jealous Scribe which the Talmud represents her husband, under the name of Paphus or Pappus-ben-Juda.[3] By a singular contradiction, the rigid Pharisee voluntarily admitted to his house one of

[1] *Migdol* or *Magdala* was one of the towers guarding the plain of Genezareth.

[2] See further back the chapters relating to Saint Lazarus and Saint Martha. The opinion that Simon the Leper was her father does not merit discussion, however worthy of respect its advocates may be.

[3] Lightfoot, *Hor. Hebraic., in Matth.* XXVII: — *Hor. Evang., in Luke.* VIII.

his friends or relatives, who had assisted at his wedding, and who before long abused his confidence. This Panther had taken service and held rank in the army of Herod-Antipas, where he led the half-pagan life that Josephus[1] has pictured for us. Did he suggest the same idea to the young woman, or did it come spontaneously to herself? In any case, her residence at Magdala was too close to Tiberias to allow her to escape the temptation of frequenting the sceptical and refined society which the tetrarch brought together there, and whose follies shocked the rabbis and zealots of Galilee. Pappus could not indulge similar desires: Magdalen obtained her freedom by a divorce,[2] which the law ratified, but of which public opinion ,even that of Tiberias, did not judge favourably.[3] In the eyes of everyone she was,— to use the Gospel expression,— a sinner,[4] that is, one of those women whose chief aim is to attract attention and corrupt the conscience. To what depth of iniquity did she descend? The Fathers of the Church to whom we owe the testimony of tradition, are not agreed on this subject, by reason of the various sentiments that animate them.

Some, more attached to the reality of facts than to respect for the memory of Magdalen, compare her to those brilliant courtesans,[5] patricians often

[1] Josephus: *Vita* (by himself).

[2] Lightfoot, *loc. cit.*

[3] The Jews still call Magdalen: *Satda*, "the apostate."

[4] "In civitate peccatrix." Luke, VII, 37.

[5] St. Cyril, St. Gregory, St. Ambrose, St. John Chrysostom, etc. As Maldonatus says (in Luc. loc. cit.), it is the

by birth, distinguished by their intelligence and acquirements, round whom the Rome of that day grouped the personalities most prominent in politics, in finance, and in letters. They do not appear, whatever certain commentators may have said, to place her among the rank of public sinners, a degradation from which the wealth left by her parents must have saved her. But they are agreed that she was reckless and defiant of public opinion.

Others extenuate her fall.[1] Volatile and frivolous, — proud of her beauty and of the triumphs it secured her, — intoxicated with the seductions of luxury and pleasure, Magdalen was compromised in the eyes of the people, or rather, in the estimation of the entire city. Hellenites, Romans, and Jews united in the same feeling of blame either silently or openly declared. Tiberias was hateful to the true believers, who regarded it as an almost pagan city, and to frequent it, was to them, a kind of apostasy. The Roman or Herodian civil and military officials looked upon it as a reproduction of Naucratis or Corinth, — one of those places of merry-making, where virtuous women could scarcely go without losing their reputation, especially when they intended to take a leading part in society. Thus Magdalen became a type of these women, too numerous in our day, to whom

"constans omnium veterum opinio." — The word *meretrix* is for these the absolute translation of: *peccatrix*.

[1] A more modern sentiment which Maldonatus treats as worthy of respect, but contrary to all tradition. — Cf. Bossuet on *Les Trois Madelaine;* — Bérulle *Oeuores*, etc.

honour is a word, the meaning of which they do not seem to understand. Was she therein the least degree happier, and whatever reward the world offered her, did it gratify all her desires? Even from their flatterers such women receive more contempt than they exact sacrifices, and, though queenly in their bearing, they are in reality the saddest of slaves, and at the same time the most fragile of idols.[1] Beauty, wit, the heart itself, (for they are not always wanting in this), intellectual culture, refined taste, elegant manners, do not always suffice to procure for them what they desire still more than all, when they are by nature or education above the average — the homage of true esteem, which would allow them the illusion of a respectful love.

Greece has lauded her courtesans and has even coupled the names of Pericles and Aspasias; Egypt has deified Rhodope, the foundress of a temple and a city; imperial Rome has revelled in the songs of Ovid and Tibullus in honour of Corinna and Lesbia; the Lower-Empire has placed Theodora on the throne; the kings of France have more than once submitted to and imposed the yoke of beauties who have remained famous. But the vain illumination which surrounded them has never appeared to these enchantresses, even in the days of their most deceptive brilliancy, to compen-

[1] It is interesting to read, regarding this subject, the *Revelations* of Catherine Emmerich (c. XII, XIII, XLIX and XLVII) wherein the feelings of Magdalen's heart are described with much refinement and emotion.

sate for the simple name of a virtuous woman,[1] — that intangible crown which is forbidden to their aspirations, and for which they, nevertheless, continue to sigh. Too constantly reminded by their accomplices of the degradation to which they have fallen, they would have no longer believed in the possibility of retracing their steps, had there not remained in the depths of their weary hearts a reflex of divine beauty, like a ray of light, upon troubled waters, struggling through clouds rent by the tempest.

Those to whom God confides the delicate mission of gathering these poor strays, know how difficult it is to awaken in them a trace of faith in the esteem of honest men. Self-contempt lies hidden in the depth of their souls, bidding universal defiance to every effort of the most resourceful and patient charity to inspire a little courage and hope. The greatest of all success lies in the re-opening of these hearts obstinately folded within themselves: it is a resurrection more difficult than that of Lazarus, and how deep must be the vibration of that voice that bids them come forth from the tomb![2] Before arriving at this point many days must have been passed in which the intoxication of pleasure failed to efface the sense of their misery.[3] If the erring woman can, by

[1] "A good name is better than riches," says an ancient proverb.

[2] "Lazare, veni foras!" John, XI, 43.

[3] "Ah! que de pleurs pour Madeleine,
Avant les pleurs du repentir!"
H. de la Morvonnais.

reason of her temperament, her education, or her surroundings remain insensible to her abasement, we must regard her as one deprived of nature and spirit, — an unfortunate being in whom the last spark of the little light that shone in her at the beginning of her career, must be fatally extinguished. It is one of the mysteries of Providence, and we are not allowed to seek the reason of these anomalies so full of sadness and terror: perhaps in them we confront an inheritance transmitted through several generations, or the personified result of the vices which have for a century corrupted society. This annihilation of the moral sense is one of the signs of decadence: woman, at the end of the century — like certain flowers at the close of day, — indicates exactly the intensity of the heat, and the approach of the storm.

This absense of the moral sense is nevertheless exceptional, as are the souls themselves in whom we find it. More generally the observer discovers an incurable sadness under the false-ringing laugh, and in the feverish excitement a disrelish that nothing can overcome. Hence those unforseen and apparently inexplicable outbursts, tears, wailings, reproaches, — those violent extremes and those depressions which bear witness to hidden suffering, — those dislikes suddenly succeeding wild transport and unconstraint, — this desire for solitude, — those appeals to death, which terminate so often the tumultuous manifestations of a life without check or curb. Superior in certain respects to the man with whom she was at first

infatuated, and from whom she does not know how to free herself, nor to escape the society he provides her, the habits that are his by nature or which he assumes, the pleasures in which he indulges, — the erring woman is not slow to severely condemn all that she once believed to captivate her heart. Too weak or too effeminate to break her chain, she drags it with a sullen anger against herself and those who have enslaved her. At the same time, she accuses God, whom she dares not invoke, considering herself unworthy of being heard; curses the virtue that is a reproach to her, and the law which is her condemnation; finds the days too long, and dreads the approach of eternity, — forcing herself to no longer believe in her soul, in order to escape the nightmare of the chastisement which she wishes to doubt, and of which she is afraid, — throwing herself, as a last resource, into the vortex where everything disappears and is forgotten for the moment.

Such must have been the case with Magdalen. Her mind was too elevated, and the impressions of her birth and education too strong to allow her to endure for any length the life that had misled her, but from which she had not the courage to fly. Therefore she passed through all the phases we have indicated, and as the Gospel gives us to understand, she arrived at the lowest degradation, which is also a supreme punishment, — the physical and moral slavery of the unclean spirit.[1]

[1] Mark, XVI, 9. — "Obsessa," says James of Voragine, *Serm. de Mar. Magdalene.* — Cf. Chevallier, Récits évangél., p. 220.

Whatever the world may say, the demon often plays an immediate part in certain depravities, and the frenzies of every kind that exist in misspent lives, cannot be attributed to any other influence than his. If he be the prince of pride and voluptuousness, is he not also the gloomy monarch of despair? In the same cup he mingles the wine of intoxication with that of death, and the infatuation of pleasure becomes often in his hands the sword that smites to eternal desolation. Magdalen was "possessed," in the ordinary sense of the word, and, in explaining the extent of her misery, the Gospel does not fear to say, that she was under the power of seven devils.[1] It was indeed the precious pearl cast before swine,[2] and we understand the fervent prayers of Martha calling on the divine seeker,[3] who would recover it at the price of His own blood, to place it in His diadem.

The sacred text permits us to fix Magdalen's deliverance at a few days before the invitation of Simon the Pharisee, probably at the time when the healings of the sick and those possessed were multiplied at Capharnaum.[4] This is, at least, the simplest way of explaining the act of Magdalen in coming to throw herself at the feet of Jesus, without subtracting any of its sublime beauty. Doubt-

[1] Mark, XVI, 9: De qua ejecerat *septem daemonia.*

[2] Matth., VII, 6: "Neither cast ye your *pearls before swine;* lest they trample them under their feet."

[3] Matth., XIII, 45: "A merchant seeking good pearls."

[4] Matth., XII, 10-22; — Mark, III, 10-12; — Luke, VII, 21.

less, our explanation is contrary to the opinion of those who believe in a relapse of the poor sinner,[1] and who connect her possession by the devil with a return to the old life; but we are not concerned here with an opinion that is altogether gratuitous, and we prefer to follow the commentators, who see in the impetuosity of Magdalen a natural proof of her gratitude towards her deliverer.[2]

The Master had received an invitation from a Pharisee named Simon,[3] which He had willingly accepted, though He could foresee a want of respect on the part of His host, who was more desirous, perhaps, of satisfying his own curiosity or his vanity, than of honouring his illustrious guest. "The welcome was stiff and scarcely civil. This haughty Pharisee found it hard to show respect to Him who otherwise disregarded a sect as proud as it was powerful."[4] Simon neglected to pay the customary marks of esteem and good-will to his guest, but the Master affected not to perceive it, and took His place at table with the Pharisee and his friends, surrounded, as was usual in the East, by a crowd of people curious to have a nearer view of the Prophet.

It was the evening of one of those spring days[5] that are so sweet and peaceful on the shores of the

[1] Catherine Emmerich, *op. cit.*, c. LXXII.

[2] Le Camus, Vie de N.-S. J.-C., t. II, p. 31, and note 2. — Cf. Grenade, Traité de la Vie de N.-S., c. XXXI, § 1.

[3] Luke, VII, 36.

[4] Le Camus, Vie de N.-S. J.-C., t. II, p. 29.

[5] At the end of May in the year 31, according to Chevallier, op. cit., p. 217.

lake of Tiberias. The gentle breeze wafted softly into the room, caused a flickering of the lamps by the light of which Jesus and Simon took their repast, in silence and with a gravity that arose rather from constraint than from custom. Around them was the same reserve, so clearly pointed out in the pithy sentence of Saint Luke.[1] The rupture with the Pharisees of Capharnaum had not yet taken place, but it was in the air, so to speak, and everyone felt it coming, in spite of Simon's ambiguous graciousness and the courtesy of Jesus. In the meantime, a woman glided in behind the Master, holding in her hands one of those alabaster vases with fragile necks, which the perfumers of Tyre and Sidon used to enclose their precious ungents.[2] It was Magdalen, the still famous sinner, known to all the city by her excesses. When she learned[3] of the presence of Jesus in Simon's house, she formed the resolution of giving a public proof of her repentance. Casting herself at His feet, which the position of the divine guest allowed her to touch, she bathed them with her tears; then, loosening the tresses of her hair so artistically arranged,[4] she dried them, covered

[1] Luke, VII, 36.

[2] Pliny, *Hist. nat.*, XXXVI, 8 etc.

[3] Luke, VII, 37: "And behold . . . when she knew" etc.

[4] The abundant and tastefully arranged hair of Magdalen remains celebrated among the Jews. The Talmud speaks of it, and a corrupted tradition has given rise to the fable of *Mary the Hairdresser* (Magdila cehir Naschâya) the singular transformation of which is shown by Sepp, in his *Vie de N.-S. J.-C.*, t. I, p. 461.

them with kisses and perfumed them with the spikenard contained in the alabaster vase.

This action was nothing extraordinary in itself, as the pious women of Judaism sometimes anointed the Rabbis who were celebrated for their learning or their sanctity.[1] But the character of her person singularly changed the tenor of this circumstance, which could not but arouse the susceptibilities of the Pharisees. What brought this dissolute woman here? — And if she did not understand the indecency of her conduct, how was it that Jesus took no notice of it? Ecclesiastes had compared such creatures to the mud that is trampled under foot on the high-way,[2] and the Rabbis taught that they must not be approached nearer than four cubits;[3] Jesus could not be unaware of the fact. It must be, then, that He did not know with what a shameless creature He was treating, and hence Simon was justified in saying: "If He were a prophet He would know what miserable woman touches Him, and that she is a public sinner."

Perhaps Simon alone thought thus, because the others remembered her deliverance from the evil spirit, and her conversion; perhaps, also, they had not remarked her bearing, or had not at first

[1] Cf. Wetstein, *Hor. Hebraicæ*, in h. l. — It was also the custom of slaves towards their masters.

[2] Eccli., IX, 10: "Omnis mulier quae est fornicaria quasi stercus in via conculcabitur."

[3] "Quanto spatio a meretrice recedendum est? — Rabbi Chasda respondit: Ad quatuor cubitos." (Schoettgen, Horæ Hebraicæ, I, p. 348.)

recognised her in the gloom that concealed her. It seems, at least, from the silence of the Gospel that they shared neither the astonishment nor the scandal of Simon, and Jesus does not include them in the lesson that He gives to the Pharisee. "Simon, I have something to say to thee. — Master, say it. — A creditor had two debtors: the one owed him five hundred pence, the other only fifty. And whereas they had not wherewith to pay, he forgave them their debt. Which, therefore, of the two loved him most?" — "He, I suppose," Simon hastily replied, "to whom he forgave most." — "Thou hast judged rightly," said Jesus; and turning towards Magdalen: "Thou seest this woman! . . . . I entered into thy house, and thou gavest Me no water for My feet: she has covered them with her tears and dried them with her hair. Thou gavest Me not the traditional kiss, but she, since she has been here, has not ceased to kiss My feet. Thou hast not anointed My head, but she has anointed My feet."

A species of grave irony contrasted the negligence or the impertinence of Simon with the humble tenderness of this poor creature who devoted herself to the feet, only to the feet of the Master, not daring to raise herself to His face, above all to His lips, which the seemingly just man ought to have anointed and kissed. Simon, with bowed head, remembered, no doubt, his debt towards the divine mercy, and, in his conscience, more or less enlightened, found it less heavy than that of the poor sinner. The conclusion forced

itself upon him: having received less, he should have loved less; and, — as the Master made him feel, — having but little gratitude, he had neglected to appear solicitous. However, that was not what Jesus would have him understand. — "Wherefore," He concluded, "I say to thee: many sins are forgiven her because she hath loved much." [1]

When He had exorcised the demon, perhaps Jesus had said to her, as to the paralytic of Bethsaida: "Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest some worse thing happen to thee;" [2] — but without asking her to confess her sins, without imposing any penance, — thus increasing her debt by the extreme tenderness and magnificence of the benefit conferred. Yielding to the inspiration of her heart, Magdalen conceived that she could not do better than give public expression to its overflowing anguish, even at the risk of ignoring what the world calls its conventionality. With her there was no question of a confession better calculated to give scandal than to make reparation: she proposed only to place her person and her life at the Master's feet, as a slave henceforth bound to self-denial and obedience. [3] Of what importance to her was the opinion of a world in which she had found, with the cause of her ruin, the contempt and hardness that nearly made that

[1] Luke, VII, 47: "Remittuntur ei peccata multa quoniam dilexit multum."

[2] John, V, 14: "Ecce sanus factus es: jam noli peccare," etc.

[3] I Reg., XXV, 41: "Ecce famula tua sit in ancillam, ut lavet pedes servorum domini mei."

ruin irreparable?[1] "Thus," as Saint Augustine says, "without awaiting an invitation, she had run to her physician, to ask with pious effrontery the fulness of her cure, seemingly importunate to the guests, but sure of not being considered imprudent in the eyes of her Benefactor."[2]

"She whom a life of sin has rendered unimpressionable," Saint Gregory observes, "has felt the powerful flame of love kindle in her heart, when purified,"[3] and, like the spouse in the Canticles, she has risen to seek her beloved, with foolish ardour, dreading neither rebuffs nor ill-treatment, lost in the thought of the bond that unites her to His feet. "Because," says the sacred text, "true love is strong as death; its fire burns like that of hell, spreading afar its irresistible rays."[4] And this new fire had consumed all. Of the Magdalen who had scandalized Tiberias and Capharnaum, there remained no longer a trace. The perfumes that had infatuated the slaves of her coquetry,[5] she spread upon the feet of Him whose *perfumes were henceforth to draw her*[6] into the ways of penitence; the tresses with which she had hitherto bound so many hearts, she

[1] S. August., Homil. XXIII, cit Isai., LXV, 5.

[2] Id., *Homil.* XXIII, *in Evangel.*

[3] S. Gregor., *Homil.* XXV, in Evangel.

[4] Cant. VIII, 6.

[5] II. Paralip., XVI, 14: "Lectum suum plenum aromatibus et unguentis meretriciis quae erant pigmentariorum arte confecta."

[6] Cant., I, 3: "Trahe me post te: curremus in odorem ungentorum tuorum."

loosened that He might cut them freely, — a harvest gilt by the sun of His mercy, — a rich trophy of the victory achieved by His love. With silent lips, because no word could interpret the feelings of her heart, she explained all by tears and kisses, a thousand times more eloquent. The Master had good reason to say: "She has loved much"; for one must indeed love much to humiliate oneself thus, and to annihilate self in a similar protestation of love! [1]

And the conclusion is evident: "Many sins are forgiven her because she has loved much." Note well, He had not remitted her sins, of which she had not asked pardon, since she was specially anxious for her corporal cure, but now she is purified by a solemn absolution: "Thy sins are forgiven thee!" [2] Then, Magdalen had nothing but gratitude for Him, but the night, inspirer of prudent counsels,[3] showed her its inadequacy, and love rose in her heart as the dawn, which the recognition of her pardon made more brilliant than the noon-day. [4]

Happy Magdalen! Her noon-day shall have no decline, and the same beams shall shine on the last of her days as on the evening when, on the shores of the lake, she heard the Saviour Himself defend, against the ironies of the Pharisees, the

[1] Grenade, Traité de la vie de N.-S., c. XXXI, § 1.

[2] Luke, VII, 48: "Remittuntur tibi peccata."

[3] Eccli., XL, 5: "Somnus noctis immutat scientiam."

[4] Psalm. XXXVI, 6: "And He will bring forth thy justice as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday."

confidence which had gained her salvation, and established her in peace.[1]

From this day she followed the Master, with Mary and the women named in the Gospel; Cleophas, Salome, Susanna, Joanna wife of Chusa, and her own sister Martha, who had for a long time been a disciple of the Messiah.[2] It was the custom of the pious Jewish women to associate with the disciples who collected the teachings of illustrious rabbis, and no one dreamed of being astonished at their so doing.[3] If Magdalen had given scandal, it was at least extenuated by her conversion, and her presence in the train of the prophet would contribute to the glory of Him, who should no longer have to bear the reproach of being too eager to welcome sinners. As for the Apostles, they had but to meditate on the parables of the lost sheep and the lost groat, or the Prodigal Son, to admit that they had forgotten the calling of Levi, and the hospitality of Zacheus. Moreover, we may well believe that the affection which they felt, like their Master, for Martha and Lazarus, should be shared by Magdalen, whose waywardness they had so often deplored and whose conversion they had so ardently desired. She had

[1] Luke, VII, 50: "Thy faith hath made thee safe: Go in peace."

[2] Matth., XXVII, 55; — Luke, VIII, 2-3.

[3] Saint Jerome recalls this custom (*In Matth.*, XXVII, 56) according to the *Neveh Schalom*, fol. 56. — Cf. I Cor. IX, 5. — Fillion thinks, however, (In Luke, VIII, 2-3), that Our Saviour made an innovation in as much as He allowed women to follow Him on His journeys.

long been dear to them, dearer still since her repentance; each one of them, — with the exception perhaps of Judas,[1] — regarded her as a sister given back to the family of which they themselves were children.

Leaving Magdala, then, which she seems only to have seen again in passing,[2] the converted sinner joined the pious caravans which journeyed through Palestine from the years 32 to 34. From time to time she retired with Martha and Lazarus into the solitude of Bethany, when the Master interrupted His preachings or found it necessary to fly for a time from the pursuits of the Sanhedrin. There she lived on the remembrance of the intimacy to which she had been admitted, and in the hope of still further enjoying its delights: and when the divine Friend returned to visit His chosen hosts, she remained kneeling or seated by His side,[3] enchanted by the sound of His voice and the beauty of His countenance, insensible to Martha's anxieties, and relishing with delight the better part that she had chosen, which could not be taken from her.[4]

[1] John, XII, 4—6 (where the insinuation is very apparent).

[2] Raban Maur (*Vita S. Mariae Magdal.*, c. XI) says that Our Lord returned there frequently, — *assidue*, — and that He lodged there with Martha and Mary in the course of His preachings in Galilee.

[3] Luke, X, 39: "Sitting also at the Lord's feet, heard His word." — "Magdalena vero *assueta* orationi et *pedibus Domini*," says the Brev. Rom., on the 29th July.

[4] Luke X, 42: "Optimam partem elegit, quae non auferetur ab ea." — By an error *Optimam* is nearly always trans-

Let us pause here for a moment to reply to the question which has, no doubt, already suggested itself to the mind of our readers, but which, not being formulated, consequently remains unanswered. "What was the nature of Magdalen's affection for the Saviour? Was it similar to our ordinary affections, or purely supernatural?" It may seem at first rash to search too closely into this mystery, but if the heart of Jesus loves to be interrogated,[1] we cannot injure Magdalen by penetrating hers, while doing so with the reserve and respect that the object of our investigation demands. Even human friendship is a gift of God,—"the highest visible recompense of virtue," says Père Lacordaire, — and when the occasion presents itself of studying it under the most perfect form it has ever assumed, we should be wanting in respect to God Himself, if we neglected to seek out the measure of so great a favour.[3]

In short, the question proposed is this: Could Jesus-Christ, first of all as man, be the object of a natural affection, before being, as God, the object of a supernatural love? The reply is contained in what we have already said of the human nature and human life of Jesus-Christ, and we might rest satisfied were it not more profitable to our instruc-

lated as *better*. The Greek text, it is true, says: "Τὴν ἀγαθὴν μερίδα."

[1] Psalm, CXXXVIII, 23: "Know my heart: examine me, and know my paths."

[2] *Sainte Madeleine*, c. I.

[3] Grenade (Traité de la vie de N.-S., c. XXXI, § 1) is very interesting on this point.

tion and to the Saviour's glory, to penetrate further into the study of the sentiments He alone could inspire.

God is absolutely the only being worthy of our love, that is, of the total surrender of our heart without desiring any return But, invisible to the eyes of the flesh and incomprehensible to mental effort, He has deigned to give us Himself in the creatures made to His image, like mirrors[1] in whom we can see and appreciate a reflex of His perfections; just as we can admire the reflection of the sun in crystal waters, though we may not fix our eyes upon himself. The first cause, then, of all true affection, is the participation, in a greater or less degree, of the perfect beauty of God. Consciously or unconsciously, this recognition of the divine is the reason of the admiration and veneration we feel for those we love,—it increases our affection and incessantly ennobles it in our eyes, and bears us along in its ascent to the principle of its origin.[2]

The humanity of the Incarnate Word was the purest and most faithful mirror of the eternal beauty: consequently it possessed the strongest power of attraction that can be conceived, and nothing was more natural than to love the Man in Jesus-Christ. The more one knew Him, the more

[1] I Cor., XIII, 12: "We see now through a glass in an obscure manner."

[2] *Summ. Theol.*, I, q. LXIII, 3, c: "Commune est omni creaturae ut per motus et operationes suas tendat sicut in finem suum in assimilationem divinae bonitatis, conservando suum esse et communicando illud."

affection was imperative. This is well understood by those upright and generous souls to whom is vouchsafed the revelation of the most complete and active perfections, hidden to the proud and sensual who are capable only of feeling the weight of majesty transparent through the veil of human weakness.[1] It was thus that He drew to Himself children, the humble, the suffering, and the despised, by a charm that quickly became an affectionate dominating power. With greater reason were those whom He admitted to intimate intercourse inflamed by this power, such as the Apostles and holy women, and among them those specially chosen — John the Evangelist and Lazarus, Martha and Magdalen, whose eyes read His heart most clearly. And since affection bestowed should be in the measure of affection testified, is it astonishing that He was loved in the same proportion as He Himself loved?

Why, then, should not Magdalen have experienced at first a feeling of natural affection for the divine Master? Her quick intelligence, her ardent nature, were a sufficient motive for her attachment to the beauty that had influenced so many others less capable of appreciating it. Could she, the object of such great mercy, fail to feel both love and gratitude spring up in her heart? Had Magdalen been indifferent, she would have been a thousand times less comprehensible than

[1] Matth., XI, 25: "Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones."

the enamoured penitent that tradition represents her.[1]

In drawing hearts to Himself Jesus enlightened and purified them, supernaturalised them in a sense, by the ever-increasing revelation of His hidden glory, by a kind of anticipated vision of His divinity; not as the elect shall see it in Heaven, but as it is given to many of them while still on earth. To those who gave Him much, He gave much in return; inviting them thus to consummate the sacrifice of all that was human or simply natural; until He led them to a state of enlightenment in which nothing earthly was any longer visible—and for that reason, nothing was any longer desirable. Magdalen arrived at this state, but not all at once, strongly as she was attracted towards the God whom she recognised in the Man, at their first meeting. She was in the beginning too conscious of her misery, even to dream of claiming the affection of the man; but she had confidence in that of God precisely because she was the conquest of His grace.[2] Her love, then, from the first moment was supernatural and divine, not forgetting, however, that God came to her under the form of a man most worthy of her

[1] "Prima meretur gaudia quae plus ardebat coeteris." (*Hymn. Vesper. in festo S. Mariae Magdalenae.*)—"Redemptoris ardentissima dilectrix . . . ad pedes Christi adepta est," says Raban Maur (*De Vita B. Mariae Magdalenae,* c. XXXVIII). He calls her also in his *prologue:* "Dulcissima dilectrix Christi."

[2] Psalm. XVII, 20: "He saved me, because He was well pleased with me."

love, and that she heard from human lips the words: "Thy sins are forgiven thee; thou may'st go in peace."

From the day that Magdalen was thus admitted to the Saviour's friendship, she had no other desire than to render herself more and more worthy, by her fidelity to the inspirations of grace. We find her twice in the Gospel, before the hour when we shall see her weeping in silence at the foot of the cross; and it is at Martha's house in Bethany, the retreat she appears to have chosen in order to reconcile her desire to fly from the world with the hope of frequently meeting there her divine Friend.[1]

Jesus loved this retreat, where His heart expanded in an atmosphere of tenderness and fidelity, which He had scarcely found elsewhere in the same degree. The house of Peter at Capharnaum, — that of Zacheus at Jericho, afforded Him an agreeable hospitality, of which, however, He does not appear to have availed Himself to the same extent. Bethany was in truth His place of rest, and He returned there as often as the necessities of His evangelical mission permitted. At each solemn feast, when He went up to Jerusalem, the house of Martha was the last stage of His journey towards the Holy City, even if He did not take up

[1] Raban Maur says, as we have already seen, that she continued to visit Magdala, where she had several opportunities of receiving the Master, during His apostolate in Galilee. (*Vit. S. Mariae Magdal.*, c. XI). — But the Gospel and tradition appear to give to Bethany a character more in conformity with our opinion.

His abode there, as it appears from the eight days which preceeded His Passion.

If Martha, then, showed her eagerness to serve the Master, Magdalen preferred to listen to the words that fell from the divine lips, like drops of dew upon the heart and soul of His servant. In vain did Martha, whose love constrained her to action, endeavour to draw her sister from this indolent contemplation: Jesus defended Magdalen, and secured her the tranquil joy of the part she had chosen by His inspiration. She was not, however, inactive when occasion demanded, as on the day when, at the house of Simon the Leper, she renewed the anointing of Capharnaum.[1] But now her appearance had changed, her charms were quite different. "She was no longer the woman whose youth and beauty were but a cloak for the infamy of vice, and who timidly approached the feet of Jesus like a servant, there to shed and dry her tears. Three years of grace had passed over her head, and sanctity enveloped her whole person in a divine radiance. She enters therefore, and breaking the alabaster vase which she holds in her hands, she pours its perfume on the head of the Saviour. Magdalen breaks the alabaster because she understands that all is over, and that never again shall the Lord receive from the piety of men, a similar homage. This action of prophetic love and despair accomplished, Mary remembers her former baseness, and running to the feet of

[1] Matth., XXVI, 6-13; — Mark, XIV, 3-9; John, XII, 2-8.

Jesus, she pours on them from a remnant of the vase, the remainder of the perfume, which she dries with her hair. But the Gospel mentions no more tears. She should shed them for the last time on another occasion, and in another place. Here strength and serenity were required: it was no longer the hour of pardon, and the hour of the tomb had not yet arrived."

Eternal wretchedness of men! This time it is not the Pharisee who doubts his God, because he sees Him touched by a sinner; it is the disciples themselves who are indignant to see so precious a perfume shed upon the head of their Master — on this head that they shall soon see crowned with thorns. "For what good," they say among themselves, "the waste of this perfume? It might have been sold for more than three hundred pence and given to the poor."[1] Herein we recognise the weakness of our intellect before the mysteries of God. Jesus is not offended at their want of faith; He says to them gently: "Let her alone: why do you molest her? She hath wrought a good work upon Me: for the poor you have always with you, but Me you have not always. She hath done what she could, and she is come beforehand to anoint My body for the burial. Amen, I say to you, wheresoever this Gospel shall be preached in the whole world, that also which she hath done shall be told for a memorial of her."[2] One feels the tone of sadness in these words, and witnesses also

[1] Mark, XIV, 4-5.
[2] Mark, XIV, 6-9.

the advance of Mary Magdalen in love and knowledge. What words have already been spoken of this woman, and from whose lips they have fallen! — "Many sins shall be forgiven her because she hath loved much. — Mary hath chosen the better part which shall not be taken from her. — Wheresoever this Gospel shall be preached, that also which she hath done shall be told for a memorial of her." [1]

But she was yet again to hear words still more profound and sweet. On Calvary, though the Master's eyes must have fallen upon her, no sound escaped His lips; that hour belonged entirely to God, to souls, to their definite reconciliation. No special friendship was prominent, and Mary herself here received from her Son only the name of mother, which He used for man's benefit. But on the day of the Resurrection, after the debt of filial love had been paid by His apparition to Mary, Jesus could not leave it unpaid to the strongest and most tender friendship. This is why, the Gospel tells us, He appeared first to Mary Magdalen, and the sacred text strangely adds "out of whom He had cast seven devils." [2] What a remembrance in such a circumstance! The Evangelist was right in recalling it. Mary was the chosen friend of the Redeemer because she was His most perfect conquest, — because she loved Him more ardently in acknowledgment of His great mercy, — because

[1] Lacordaire, *Sainte Marie-Madelaine*, c. IV.

[2] Mark, XVI, 9: "Surgens autem .... apparuit primo Mariae Magdalenae, de quae ejecerat septem daemonia."

she had shared and taken a principal part in the sufferings of His Passion. She had thus a right "to the privilege of being the first to see the Son of God risen from the tomb, the vanquisher of the devil, of sin, of the world, of death; and to be the first to obtain by this vision, the certainty and consolation of the eternal salvation of mankind."[1] But let us follow Saint John's account of this interview between Magdalen and the risen Jesus.[2] There is not in all the books that are justly prized, a page comparable to this.

"On the first day of the week Mary Magdalen cometh in the morning, it being yet dark, to the sepulchre, and she saw the stone taken away from the sepulchre. She ran, therefore, and cometh to Simon-Peter and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and said to them: They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid Him. Peter, therefore, went out, and that other disciple, and they came to the sepulchre . . . . So the disciples (having found nothing but the linen cloths lying) went away again to their home. But Mary stood without at the sepulchre, weeping. Whilst she was there weeping, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre. And she saw two Angels in white, sitting, one at the head, and one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had been laid. They say to her: Woman, why weepest thou? She saith to them: Because they have taken away my Lord, and I

[1] Lacordaire: *op. cit.*, c. V.

[2] John, XX, 1–18.

know not where they have laid Him. When she had said these words, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing; and she knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus saith to her; Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, thinking that it was the gardener, saith to Him: Sir, if thou hast taken Him away, tell me where thou hast laid Him, and I will take Him away. Jesus saith to her; Mary. She, turning, saith to Him; Rabboni (that is to say, Master)! Jesus saith to her: Do not touch Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren, and say to them: I ascend to My Father and to your Father, to My God and your God!"

What commentary would not disfigure the splendour of this incomparable narrative? Let us borrow, however, from the historian of Magdalen's heart some words that are sure to be found worthy of a place after those of Saint John. "Mary! Oh, the accent in which this word was spoken! An accent of reproach, because Magdalen had not recognised Jesus; an accent of revelation contained in the reproach. Mary! ah, even here on earth, how sweet is our name on the lips of a friend, and how it pierces to the sorrowful depths of our being! And if it were God who pronounced it in caressing tones; if it were God, dead for us, risen for us, who called us by our name, what echo would it not waken in the infinite abyss of our misery? Mary Magdalen understood everything in her name: she understood the mystery of the Resurrection which she had not hitherto con-

ceived: she understood in it the love of her Saviour, and in this love she recognised Him. Master! she replied. But one word sufficed, as one word had sufficed for the Son of God. The more souls love one another, the fewer their words." [1]

After this incident, the Gospel seems to hesitate to pronounce this henceforth-consecrated name, which we shall find only in tradition and history.[2] Following closely in the footsteps of the Virgin-Mother, Magdalen took part with her in the last events of the terrestial life of the Redeemer. Then, placed by Peter under the care of the disciple Maximin, as her sister had been confided to that of the deacon Parmenas, she continued her life of meditation and prayer in the house of Bethany, now become the cathedral church of her brother Lazarus.[3] Did she follow him to the island of Cyprus, at the time of the first dispersion of the disciples? We may doubt it and we believe it more probable that she stayed for a short time in the more tranquil Galilee, or in some Phoenician town on the sea-coast, whence she returned to

[1] Lacordaire, *op. cit.*, c. V.

[2] Raban Maur has left us a history of Magdalen (*Vita B. Mariae Magdalenae*), the authority of which is generally recognised. — There is usually coupled with this work a very ancient *Life of Saint Magdalen* revised by Raban Maur and James of Voragine. — Cf. Faillon (Monuments inédits), Lacordaire (Sainte Marie-Madeleine), etc.

[3] We have related further back (Book II, chapter II), the oriental tradition that Magdalen took up her abode in the sepulchre of Lazarus, where she lived as a recluse for several years.

Jerusalem on the death of Saint James and the imprisonment of Saint Peter. About this period, the prince of the Apostles ordered the definite dispersion of the first witnesses of the faith, and he sent a great number of them to Gaul and Spain, among whom we find Lazarus, his two sisters, Maximin and Parmenas. We have seen elsewhere how the Jews of Joppa tried to destroy the hopes of the friends of Jesus, also how God preserved them from death and guided them to the shores of Provence, where the evangelisation of the Gauls began, and whence the Apostles of Spain went to the people whom they were to bring to the knowledge of the faith. Passing through Arles, where local tradition attributes to her a share in the first efforts of Trophimus,[1] Magdalen went down towards Marseilles, where she was actively associated with the apostolic works of Martha and Lazarus. If we may believe the ancient documents examined by James of Voragine,[2] she obtained from the first an ascendancy over the mind of the chief magistrate of Marseilles, and that of his wife, due as much to her personal charm as to the force of her words and the power of her miracles. After having saved from death the wife and her newly-born child, she brought back sound and unhurt the husband who had

[1] Cf. Mistral, Mireio, c. XI. — The same tradition points to Magdalen as having first evangelised the country of Maguelonne, immediately after embarking. (Gariel, *Hist. des évêques de Maguelonne et de Montpellier.*)

[2] *Legenda aurea: De sancta M. Magdalena*, fol. LXXX verso.

undertaken a voyage to Rome, and prevailed upon him to favour the preaching of the Gospel in the old Phoenician city and the whole extent of his territory. There is nothing incredible in this story, provided that we allow for the marvellous, with which the piety of the middle ages appears to have surrounded historical facts. "These vain amplifications of a false rhetoric" are to the "popular and all-powerful tradition" what parasites are to the oak: they take nothing from its value, but confirm it, on the contrary, by showing how deeply it remains engraven on all minds and hearts.[1]

Magdalen was not, however, to fix her abode at Marseilles, and Maximin took her with him to Aix, of which city he was the first Bishop.[2] Then she left him to withdraw into solitude, so as to leave herself full liberty for contemplation, which became more and more the law of her life, in conformity with the words of the Lord. "Leaving Marseilles and going in the direction of the Alps, the traveller enters a valley that skirts the sea which is still hidden by the high mountains that intercept the view of its waves. On the opposite side there arises another chain, and between these two ramparts the valley runs towards an abrupt amphitheatre which seems to bar his progress, while a river bordered with trees glides without obstacle through rich meadows, and fertilizes a

[1] Lacordaire, *op. cit.*, c. VI.

[2] There was still to be seen, at the beginning of our century, in the church of Saint-Saviour, the oratory where Saint Magdalen prayed.

thousand habitations. Its name is as obscure as its waters.[1] It guides the traveller, so to speak, and after meandering through a more open country, arrested by the mountains it turns abruptly to the left, tumbles into a ravine in a foaming torrent, and shooting along through a maze of wooded peaks and bare summits, it at length finds its source near a peaceful plateau crowned by an immense solitary rock . . . . In the centre of these high and precipitous rocks, which resemble a curtain of stone, the eye discovers a habitation which seems suspended in mid-air, and at their base a forest, the novelty of which attracts attention. There is no longer the tapering and sweet-scented pine of Provence, nor the green oak, nor the spreading trees that the traveller has encountered on his way. One might say that, by an inexplicable prodigy, the North has lavished here all the magnificence of its vegetation. Here is the soil and the sky of the South, with the shady forests of England. Quite near, two paces off, on the mountain side, one discovers the true nature of the country; this spot making the sole exception. And if one penetrates but a little way, the forest envelopes one in all its majesty, resembling in its profound darkness, its shadows, and its silence, those sacred woods which the hatchet of the ancients never profaned. There also the centuries have sole access; they alone by right may blast the ancient trunks and reanimate their vigour;

[1] It is the Huveaune, a rivulet that empties itself into the sea at Marseilles, at the extremity of the Prado.

they alone have reigned and still reign, the instrument of a respect higher than their own, and which add to the delight of the eye, also the delight of thought." [1]

At the side of the rock that overhangs the forest, a deep cavern opens, in the centre of which there is an eminence always dry in the midst of the oozing waters that give birth to the river Huveaune. It was to this place that Magdalen usually came to pray and rest during the short moments stolen from contemplation. Seven times a day, so tradition affirms,[2] she was raised in the arms of angels to the summit of the rock, as on another Thabor, "to hear there what Saint Paul declares he heard without being able to give it expression.[3] During thirty years she led this almost heavenly life, while waiting her final reunion with Him whom she sought with eager eyes in the profound depths of the sky of Provence. The day of this reunion had been foretold her, not by the angels who ministered to her, but by the Son of God Himself.[4] When it came, she was transported to the end of the valley, on the Aurelian Way, at some distance from the oratory in which Maximin lived, near the town of Tegul-

[1] Lacordaire, *op. cit. Prologue.*

[2] Raban Maur (*De Vita B. Mariae Magdalenae*, c. XXXIX) hesitates to acknowledge the value of this tradition, without however rejecting it altogether.

[3] Lacordaire, *op. cit.*, c. VII. — A chapel called Saint Pilon commemorates the place of these ecstasies.

[4] Raban Maur, *op. cit.*, c. XLV, cit *Codices Regii.*

ata.[1] "The Bishop awaited here the friend of his Master;[2] he received her, gave her the Holy Communion of the body and blood of Jesus Christ, and falling into the sleep of death, she rested in peace. Saint Maximin laid her body in a tomb of alabaster, and there prepared his own vault opposite the monument where he had preserved the relics which should confer on this hitherto unknown corner of the world, an immortal fame.[3]

The basilica raised by the piety of the faithful over the tomb of the illustrious penitent, contained her relics for seven hundred years, during the course of which Cassian, in the fourth century, established under her protection the religious whom he had already settled at Marseilles, near the tomb of Saint Lazarus. At the beginning of the eighth century the Saracens invaded Provence, pillaging and destroying the churches. To avoid the profanation of the relics confided to their care, the Cassianites concealed beneath earth and stones the crypt where she reposed, after having taken the precaution to engrave on the sepulchre of Magdalen, an inscription which should guarantee its authenticity. On the 9th December 1279, Charles of Anjou, nephew of Saint Louis, obeying a divine inspiration, excavated the place which had been pointed out to him, and brought to light the alabaster tomb in which the friend of the Saviour

[1] Voy, Itinéraire d'Antonin. — Now the town of Saint-Maximin (Var).

[2] "Amica Salvatoris," say the Codices Regii.

[3] Lacordaire, *op. cit.*, c. VII. — V. in *Appendix*, letter A.

slept. A marvellous sign enabled him to recognise the remains of Magdalen without hesitation. On her forehead, over the left temple, there still adhered a piece of living flesh, which marked the place where the hand of the risen Jesus had touched Magdalen, when He had said to her: "Noli me tangere!" [1]

On the 12th May of the following year, Charles solemnly translated the relics so miraculously discovered. He placed apart, in precious reliquaries, the head, which his father, the king of Sicily, adorned with his own crown; and a bone of the right arm which had spread the perfume on the feet of Christ. A silver reliquary received the rest of the bones, and the whole were enclosed in a subterranean chapel of marble, over which the construction of a large church was commenced, which was later on confided to the care of the Friar-Preachers.[2]

From this moment the devotion of the people did not cease to surround the crypt of Saint Maximin with the most enthusiastic veneration. Pontiffs and kings came there to lay down the splendour of their crowns. Louis XI, Charles VIII, Louis XII, Anne of Bretagne, Francis I, Charles IX, Louis XIII, and Louis XVI brought there the homage of France. John XXII, Benedict XII, Clement VI, Innocent VI, Urban V,

[1] This fragment of flesh was detached from the skull in 1780: since then it has been preserved, without corruption, in a crystal vase, on the altar of the crypt.

[2] By a Bull of Boniface VIII, dated 6th April 1295.

Gregory XI, Clement VII, and Benedict XIII, brought there still more, — the testimony of the veneration of the whole Catholic world. During the tempest of the revolution God charged Lucien Bonaparte to watch over the remains of His friend; not a stone of the walls that protected them fell, and "when the divine anger, appeased by so many misfortunes, passed away from us, France was astonished to find still standing, the work of the nephews and sons of Saint Louis, and engraved thereon the name of a new race and the commencement of another history." [1]

Obedient to the teachings of the past, our century has retaken the way of the Sainte-Baume and of Saint Maximin, where the most illustrious of Magdalen's historians has re-established the Friar-Preachers. "O condescension of God for our cherished aspirations," exclaims Lacordaire, "we have seen the vacant cloister repeopled, the ancient splendour reassume its interrupted harmony, the past emerge from its tomb with a youth we could not believe possible, and we fancy we have heard Jesus-Christ say to the faithful friend who could not believe in His resurrection, this word of reproach and light: Mary!" [2]

[1] Lacordaire, *op. cit.*, c. VII.
[2] Id. ibid., c. VIII.

THIRD BOOK.

THE FRIENDS OF HIS MISSION.

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THE FRIENDS OF HIS MISSION.

CHAPTER I.

The Apostles.

"I have called you friends."
John XV, 15.

If natural affections maintain an ascendancy over our hearts that bids defiance to time and death, they are, notwithstanding, less powerful than those whose source lies in our free choice. The Scripture rightly says "A friend is preferable to a brother," [1] because from a friend one may expect those consolations and helps for which one does not look in a brother, unless indeed he has also become a chosen friend. The ties of kinship do not necessarily imply the confidence, the unreserve, the union of mind and heart that are the natural outcome of friendship; they bring into contact rather than bind souls and lives together, notwithstanding the likeness which is the first cause of their affection. It does not suffice for men to be alike, to love one another; there must be the spontaneous discovery and the unconstrained proof of this similarity, which would be spoiled were it forced upon our minds and more especially upon

[1] Prov. XVIII, 24. — Eccl. VI, 15.

our conviction. Between brothers, this work of mutual study and understanding, is accomplished unconsciously, slowly and surely, determining preferences, sometimes rejections, contrary to the expectation of those who watch the development of our life; running counter to the efforts which tend to effect a closer union or to repress antipathies. Still, there always remains this difference between fraternal affection and friendship as we understand it, that the brother who becomes the friend has little or nothing to claim from the union of birth. Choice sets at naught the rights of nature, or at least, gives them always a secondary place. But, as we have already remarked, friendships formed by choice take different degrees, and arrange themselves according to the esteem in which we hold them. They disclose, in fact, a charm, more or less delightful according to their intrinsic value, their possible or realised action, or the profit and pleasure which we expect or have already derived from them. An intelligent being cannot place on the same level all the souls in whom he recognises a right to attract his own, because he discovers differences in them or in himself, according to which he must graduate their value. This is why the wise man prefers, to the friendships which make his life pleasant, those which crown it with merit and honour; that is to say, those which efficaciously serve the work for which he believes himself predestined. The first give him the happiness of repose; the second assure the glory and fruitfulness of his labour, — and, as labour is

the ordinary law of life, while rest is merely a passing accident, it is quite natural that he should prefer his fellow-workers, especially if he has been able to choose them with full liberty. Not that he is unfettered in his choice by distinctly defined conditions which determine the character of his future companions, and the expectations of which they are the guarantee; but he has the right to believe that he shall communicate to them as much of his own vigour as shall preclude all fear of their original inefficiency, and enable him to regard them as possessing already that equality on which friendship is based. In any case, he may believe them capable of friendship in the future, on account of the advantages they shall derive from union with himself: he would not be human if he had not the conviction of a superiority which should supplement the deficiencies of their beginning, and foster their onward progression. In this manner, associations that are destined to secure the fortune and renown of those who establish them, are usually formed. We may sometimes trace in them the agency of relationship and daily intercourse, and especially of kindred sympathies, so that this latter form of friendship summarises all others, particularly when time, trials borne in common, and mutual services have permanently sealed their first union.

Thus it is that we find between Jesus-Christ and His Apostles that wonderful companionship, which made the humblest among men fellow-labourers of the Incarnate Word. There can

be no doubt that He needed no one but Himself to accomplish the work of Redemption, and afterwards to give the light of His Gospel to the world. But in clothing Himself in human form, He had chosen to submit to the exigencies and the laws of our life, to subordinate thereto the development of His plan, and consequently to employ men to whom He was to communicate His spirit and His power. It is evident that He exercised in His choice the fulness of liberty; but it seems that He should choose those helpers who could not be deceived regarding the value of their participation in the work of the Master, and this the more that the weakness inherent in the human mind did not place them beyond the temptation of pride. It is not to the wise of the world, as He Himself said, but to the little ones,[1] that the heavenly Father wishes to reveal Himself through His Son. It was fitting that the Apostles should not choose, but should be chosen,[2] without antecedent merit on their part; that they should have the profound conviction of their impotence to come to the Son without the grace of the Father,[3] and that they should consider themselves always as unprofitable servants.[4] Consequently, He should communicate to them the more unceasingly His knowledge and

[1] Luke, X, 21: "Abscondisti haec a sapientibus et revelasti parvulis."

[2] John, XIII, 18; — XV, 16 and 19.

[3] Id., VI, 66: "No man can come to Me, unless it be given him by My Father.

[4] Luke, XVII, 10: "Say: We are unprofitable servants."

His power; He should thus raise them gradually even to heights, from the very thought of which the mind recoils; He should make them something more than men, if we may say so; and should one day promise them those celestial thrones, whence they should judge with Him the twelve tribes of Israel.[1]

Thus He avoided giving a scandal to the world that was easy to foresee. In allowing Himself to be helped, or rather served, by men of powerful intelligence and speech, might He not have given a pretext for the objection so often repeated, in spite of all good sense and of all real knowledge of history, — according to which the transformation of the world is the work, partially at least, of philosophers and contemporary politicians? Seneca and Marcus Aurelius have too great a share of the admiration which the adversaries of Christianity more or less sincerely bestow, for us to mistake the position that incredulity would have taken against Him, had His fellow-labourers been men of learning and distinction. It was fitting that He should appear in all the majesty of His grandeur and His power, — and draw from those vanquished by His mercy the avowal that He had chosen the weak to confound the wise of this world.[2] Twelve unknown men, mark, have sufficed for Him to conquer the universe, and there establish His authority

[1] Id., XXII, 30: "And may sit upon thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

[2] I. Cor., 1, 27.

for all time. But from whence has He chosen these twelve men?

Naturally, it suited Him to select them from the people of Israel, that is, from the only nation that had preserved intact the deposit of primitive and Mosaic revelation. Wishing, moreover, to choose disciples from this nation, before preaching to the Gentiles, He took those interpreters to whom the Jews could listen without prejudice and without hostility. Jewish exclusiveness would have created against the first efforts of the Gospel, an obstacle which seemed to Him imprudent to place in their way. We may also take into account with good reason, the love of Jesus for His terrestial country and for its citizens, even with a preference for those who lived with Him in Galilee, around Nazareth or on the shores of the lake of Tiberias. It was there, in fact, that He called them. But His first elect were not chosen on account of their close proximity[1] or their near relationship,[2] still less for their already existing friendship;[3] He affected even, one would say, to call them when they were absent from Galilee, far from Nazareth and Bethsaida, as if He feared the semblance of yielding to influences that were too natural. The Gospel states clearly the circum-

[1] Andrew and Peter were not from Nazareth, but from Tiberias.

[2] James the Greater and John the Evangelist were His cousins, but one degree further removed than James the Less, Jude, and Simon.

[3] None of them seem to have known Him before being called.

stances of this first calling, and leaves no doubt as to its character.

Three months after His baptism, Jesus stood upon the banks of the Jordan, lost among the crowd that pressed around the Precursor. John perceived Him and pointed Him out to his followers, crying: "Behold the Lamb of God, He who taketh away the sins of the world!" [1] Perhaps he had just expounded to the people the passage of Isaias: "He was offered because it was His own will, and He opened not His mouth: He shall be led as a sheep to the slaughter, and shall be dumb as a lamb before his shearer." [2] We may readily believe it, when we remember that the real mission of John the Baptist was to announce the Messiah and to prepare His ways. How was it possible to resist the desire to point Him out openly, at the moment when He deigned to show Himself so prominently? — "There," he continued; "is He of whom I have said, 'After me cometh a man who is preferred before me, because He was before me. And I knew Him not: but that He may be made manifest in Israel, therefore I am come, baptising in water.'" [3]

The emotion produced on the crowd by this revelation had no immediate results, because Jesus had merely appeared; His hour had not yet come. The following day, John was conversing with some disciples, when Jesus again stood near them.

[1] John, I, 29–31.
[2] Isai., LIII, 7.
[3] John, I, 30–32.

At sight of Him, transported into a kind of ecstasy, the Baptist repeated, but with an accent more full of meaning: "Behold the Lamb of God!" [1] Two of the listeners, Andrew and John, Galilean fishermen from the western bank of the lake, touched by this persistence in designating Jesus as the Messiah, drew near to Him with respect, and having saluted Him, waited till He should deign to question them. "What seek you?" He said to them. — "Master, where dwellest Thou?" — "Come and see." And He showed them the way to the hut, or the tent that served Him for a dwelling, following the custom of pilgrims on the shores of the Jordan. It was about four o'clock in the afternoon, and the new friends remained together until sunset.[2] "When night came, the two disciples were gained over to Jesus: they had recognised Him to be the prophet greater than Moses, He whom Israel had desiderated for so many centuries." [3]

Andrew and John had not come alone to hear the Baptist preach; they were accompanied by their brothers Simon and James, and they at once undertook to convert these to Jesus. "We have found the Messiah," said Andrew to Simon, who surrendered at once. "Thou art Simon, son of Jonas, henceforth thou shalt be called Cephas." Mysterious words, the prophetic sense of which

[1] John, I, 36.

[2] John, I, 39: "And they stayed with Him that day: now it was about the tenth hour."

[3] Fouard: Vie de N.-S. J.-C., c. IV.

the future was to disclose! "Thou art the child of a dove, that is, of a being weak and without power of resistance; but thou shalt become the son of might, immovable as the rock, by which name thou shalt be called." [1] Thus Jesus already gave proof of His authority over His disciples, by changing the name of the greatest among them, following the example of the Rabbis, to whom they themselves had compared Him.[2] John having likewise brought his brother James to Him, He gave them the surname of "sons of thunder," either from foreknowledge of their distinguished apostolate, or on account of the daring and impetuous disposition which He discovered in them.[3] A fifth Galilean, Philip, who was also from Bethsaida, and lived perhaps with the other four, was met on the following day by the Master, as He was about to depart. "Follow Me," Jesus simply said, and with the same simplicity Philip followed Him,[5] after which the little band left the shores of the Jordan, and went through the mountain-passes of Ephraim.

In the course of their travels, as they drew near Cana, Philip perceived one of his friends under

[1] John, I, 42: "Tu es Simon, filius Jona, tu vocaberis Cephas."

[2] Andrew and John had saluted Him by the title of Rabbi. (John, I, 38.)

[3] Mark, III, 17: "And He named them Boanerges, which is, The Sons of Thunder."

[4] John, I, 44: "Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter."

[5] John, I, 43: "Dicit ei Jesus: Sequere Me."

a fig-tree, Nathaniel Bar-Tolmaï,[1] a learned[2] and great[3] personage, towards whom he rushed to communicate the wonderful news: "We have found Him whom Moses and the prophets foretold! He is Jesus, son of Joseph of Nazareth." At the mention of Nazareth, Bar-Tolmaï shook his head: "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" he murmured; looking at Philip who merely replied: "Come and see for thyself." Bar-Tolmaï was an upright soul; he had no opposition to make to Philip's proposal, and went with him towards Jesus. The Master smiled as he approached: "Behold," said He, "an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile!" — Surprised at this greeting, in which he discerned a sort of revelation, Nathaniel asked Him: "Whence knowest Thou me?" — Jesus answered, "Before Philip saw thee and called thee, I saw thee under the fig-tree." — "Master," exclaimed Nathaniel, "Thou art the Son of God, the King of Israel!" The words of Jesus contained an allusion which remains inexplicable to us, but to which Bar-Tolmaï had the clue. Seized with astonishment and perhaps with fear, the new disciple could hardly repress a cry that revealed the trouble of his soul. "Thou believest," replied Jesus, "because I said I saw thee under the fig-tree: thou shalt see greater

[1] Tradition identifies Nathaniel with Bartholomew, according to John, XXI, 2 — where Nathaniel is numbered among the Apostles gathered together, with Peter, on the shores of the lake of Tiberias.

[2] S. August., *In Joann.*, I.

[3] S. Hieron., *Epist. ad Eustochium.*

things than these. Amen, amen, I say to you, you shall see the heavens opened, and the Angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man." [1]

Behold, then, six chosen Apostles. Four of them are fishermen from Bethsaida; another, born in the same town, appears to have a different occupation; the last, an inhabitant of Cana and a friend of Philip, belonged to the learned class of his country. There is no fellow-citizen of Jesus among them: two only, James and John, belong to His family through their mother, a niece of the Blessed Virgin, and the wife of Zebedee. If we may rely on the tradition regarding them, all were markedly different in age, temperament and antecedents. James and John are evidently younger than the Master; Andrew and Peter are almost His own age; Philip and Bartholomew are older. Peter alone we know is married, perhaps a widower; since the Gospel, while speaking of his mother-in-law, says nothing of his wife. James and John are free, according to the tradition which identifies the latter with the bridegroom of the wedding to which the apostolic band were going.[2]

Cana[3] was preparing the nuptial feasts for the

[1] John, I, 45–51.

[2] This very ancient tradition which is brought to our notice in the *Visions* of Catherine Emmerich, is not improbable, as we shall see later on.

[3] Now called Kefr-Kenna, a little village one league to the north of Nazareth, and which should not be confounded wit Kana-el-Jalil or Kourbet-Kana, situated further off to the northeast. (Cf. Thomson, *The Land and the Book.*)

humble people who were friends, if not relations, of Mary, and who had also invited Jesus. The companions of the Master were included in the invitation, and sat with Him at the banquet, modest like the fortune of those who gave it. It seems that Mary presided at table, at the head of the women of the family and the neighbourhood, according to the custom of the country. She soon noticed the insufficient provision of wine, which was exhausted sooner than had been expected, owing to the influx of guests on whom they had not at first counted.[1] Confident in the omnipotent charity of her Son, she approached Him and said in a low voice: "They have no more wine." — "Woman, what is that to Me or to thee? My hour is not yet come." Instantly reassured, Mary went back to the servants who had followed her with their eyes, and said to them: "Whatsoever He shall say to you, do ye." Almost immediately the Master made them a sign. They gathered around Him, and by His order filled six large urns, destined for the ablutions, with water, each containing from two to three measures, that is to say from forty to sixty litres.[2] Then Jesus said, addressing the person among the guests who performed the function of Architriclinus, or master of

[1] Such is the suggestion in the *Codex Rhedigenarius* (VII. century) which gives a different reading to the Italian version: "Et factum est per multam turbam vocatorum vinum consummari."

[2] The Greek measure was equivalent to 27 litres; the Roman to 19 litres, others say to 38. We follow the approximate quantity which assigns 19 or 20.

the table: "Draw out now, and carry to the chief steward of the feast." Conforming to the rules of his office, this latter tasted the liquor before presenting it to the guests. Scarcely had his lips touched the cup than he expressed his astonishment. They had brought him a wine, the existence of which he had not suspected, and he turned with a smile to the bridegroom and said: "Every man at first setteth forth good wine; and when men have well drank, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now." The bridegroom, more confused than surprised, understood nothing of this pleasantry, which suddenly revealed the shortcomings of his hospitality. He questioned the looks of the servants, who were reduced to silence by their own satisfaction. Mary no doubt solved the enigma, and the joyous gratitude of all these poor people must have been the best recompense to the Master for His generosity, had He not felt that faith was strengthened in the heart of the disciples, who were witness to the first manifestation of His glory.[1]

Amongst the number of invited guests we may include the sister, or sister-in-law, of the Blessed Virgin, Mary Cleophas,[2] with her sons James, Jude, and Simon. Did the miracle cause those who in the vernacular were called His brothers, to rally immediately round Jesus? The silence of the

[1] John II, 1–11.

[2] Or Mary, wife of Cleophas. She was older than Mary, it would seem; this does not coincide with the opinion which makes her the sister of the Blessed Virgin. — V. book I, c. III.

Gospel prevents our answering with certainty; but it is very probable that they did so, and that He was obliged to give them a place among His disciples, with whom He went down from Cana to Capharnaum. The Master did not make any stay at Nazareth, if He even returned there. Henceforth any sojourn in this town was to become less and less agreeable to Him, by reason of the resistance He encountered from His compatriots, already renowned for their obstinacy and rudeness. Peter, no doubt, urged Him to return to Capharnaum, where his mother-in-law's house offered the divine traveller a hospitality that was, if not princely, cordial; for the fisherman, having as his sole possessions but his boat and his nets, lived in those humble circumstances which are the ordinary lot of his fellows. Nevertheless, Jesus was pleased to dwell in this town to which He so often returned, which the Gospel calls His own city,[1] which He desired so ardently might submit to the kingdom of God, and which ended by meriting an anathema.[2] It did not owe this preference to the charm of its unrivalled situation between the hills and the lake, facing the majestic summits that bound its horizon above the waves and extended along the opposite shore; it was rather to the affection He bore His first disciples, to the sacrifice that they made of all that filled their hearts, to the pledges which they gave Him of their fidelity and their zeal, in

[1] Matth., IX, 1: "Venit in *civitatem suam*."

[2] Id., XI, 23: "And thou, Capharnaum . . . . thou shalt go down even unto hell."

presence of these waves and these mountains. Jesus, like ourselves, loved to revisit the witnesses of His most genuine pleasures, and the sadness which sometimes concealed its loveliness did not altogether efface it in His eyes, just as the light mists veil, without altogether extinguishing, the brightness of the sun on the waters of Genezareth.

Jesus did not, however, make Capharnaum His habitual abode, until He had been banished from Nazareth by His own fellow-citizens, and it was then that He definitely called the first four of His disciples to follow Him. Up to this time they had followed Him without any irrevocable bond of partnership, receiving His teachings and disseminating them, baptising even, after the example of John's disciples,[1] then returning to their ordinary occupations,[2] with the consent of their Master and ready to come back to Him again whenever He might so command. Did Philip, Bartholomew, and the sons of Alpheus follow their example? We cannot say, although we have the right to suppose in these a greater independence and consequently a more constant assiduity in the Master's service. This is, however, a mere gratuitous supposition, not warranted by the Gospel narrative, and of which the reader must judge for himself.

One day, when Jesus, after His expulsion from Nazareth, was walking on the shores of the lake, He saw Peter and Andrew rowing towards the bank, after a night of fruitless toil. "Come after

[1] John, IV, 2.

[2] Matth., IV, 18; — Mark, I, 16; — Luke, V, 2.

Me," He said to them, "and I will make you become fishers of men."[1] Forthwith they came to the shore and were preparing to draw their boat upon the beach when Jesus, hemmed in by the multitude that gathered from all parts, went into Peter's boat and asked him to draw out a little from the land. Thus, having free space, He seated Himself and began to speak to the people; then, having dismissed them, He ordered the two brothers to launch out into the deep and cast their nets: — "Master," replied Simon, "we have laboured all the night and have taken nothing; but at Thy word I will let down the net." Marvellously rewarded confidence! The capture was so great that their strength was not sufficient to draw it to the land, and they were obliged to call assistance. Another boat was on the waters at some distance, manned by the sons of Zebedee and their sailors. It came to their aid and shared in the labour and profit, and like its companion it was filled even to sinking, so abundant was the draught of fish. Beholding this miracle, Simon threw himself at the Master's feet, saying: "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." Andrew, James, and John were equally surprised. But Jesus hastened to reassure them by His reply to Simon. "Fear not: from henceforth thou shalt be taking men."[2]

The boats were pulled to shore: Jesus disembarked, accompanied by the disciples, who

[1] Matth., IV, 19: "Venite post Me et faciam vos fieri piscatores hominum."

[2] Luke, V, 1–11.

abandoned all to follow Him, obeying His words: "Come after Me, and I will make you become fishers of men."[1] Zebedee remained with his men to guard the boats, while awaiting the time when he himself should follow the Prophet, as we learn from tradition. But the hour of grace had not yet struck for him, and moreover, as we see, he had not been included in the call addressed to his sons. From this time, the elect of Bethsaida do not appear to have returned to their country, except in company with their Master, to whom they had surrendered themselves. Philip and Bartholomew soon rejoined them, if indeed they had ever ceased to accompany Jesus, and the end of the first year of His public ministry saw Him surrounded by all those whom He should consecrate by the title of Apostles.

Towards the end of this year He had met at the office of the toll-collectors of Capharnaum, a publican named Levi, a son of Alpheus,[2] whom He had asked to follow Him, and who had at once obeyed. This conversion had given scandal, the more so that Levi (or Matthew,[3] as he wast henceforth called), was eager to gather his friends together to celebrate a feast in which Jesus deigned to take part. The Pharisees had taken occasion therefrom to point out to their disciples the scorn of the Nazarean for rabbinical traditions, to which

[1] Matth., IV, 22; — Mark. I, 19–20.

[2] Mark, II, 14: "Vidit Levi Alphaei."

[3] Matthew, according to Gesenius is, like *Matthias*, a contraction of Mattaï, and signifies "gift of God" (Θεόδωρος).

Jesus had replied: "They that are in health need not a physician, but they that are sick. Go then, and learn what this meaneth: I will have mercy, and not sacrifice. For I am not come to call the just, but sinners." [1]

Another conquest made at Capharnaum was that of Judas,[2] better known by the name of Thomas or the twin,[3] which is generally given to distinguish him from Jude-Thaddeus and Judas Iscariot. According to the Apostolic Fathers, he was a native of Antioch, owed his surname to his twin-sister Lydia, and attached himself to the family of the Saviour.[4] While he never had any prominent part in the preaching of the kingdom of God, he is one of the most celebrated among the Apostles, because of his devotion to the Master, his reluctance to believe in His resurrection, and the marvellous fact that gave him proof of it. Tradition points him out at the tomb of Mary, as still incredulous, and nevertheless still as mercifully privileged: his heart was doubtless stronger than the caprices of his mind.

The last called was, without our knowing under what circumstances, a Jew of the name of Judas, son of Simon the Iscariot.[5] Long discussions have been instituted on the origin of this surname, which has passed from father to son;

[1] Matth., IX, 9–13.
[2] Eusebius, Hist. eccles., I, 13.
[3] John, XI, 16: "Thomas, qui dicitur Didymus."
[4] Patr. Apost., p. 272 and 512.
[5] John, XIII, 2: "Judas Simonis Iscariotae."

assumed by some to be derived from Kerioth, his native place,[1] but which others would derive from the leather belt worn by the perfidious Apostle. These dissertations are surely worthless, when they concern the man whose very name we would ignore, sharing the sentiment of Saint John Chrysostom.[2] Judas joined the disciples either on the banks of the Jordan, or after meeting Jesus in the course of His ministry in the south of Palestine.[3] His assiduity and zeal soon brought him into prominence, and he won the confidence of his companions; with the exception of John, however, whose eyes soon penetrated the depth of this base and mercenary soul.[4] Jesus seemed to notice nothing, and perhaps, indeed, Judas in the beginning spent days truly worthy of his vocation, before those which the Evangelist devotes to horror and scorn.

The formation of the chosen disciples was continued from that time without interruption, by the teachings given to them in common with ordinary audiences, and especially by those that they received in intimacy during those hours of overflowing confidence, when the Master opened His heart to them, — not as to servants, but as to friends.[5] For He indeed treated them as friends,

[1] Keriot or Kerioth is mentioned by Joshua, XV, 25. — Ewald says that Judas was born at Karta, a small village of the tribe of Zabulon; but this opinion is opposed by the greater number of commentators.

[2] S. John Chrysost., *Homil. de prodit. Judae.*

[3] Mark, III, 19.

[4] John, XII, 6.

[5] John, XV, 15.

associating them in all His thoughts, in all His plans, and in all His labours. The mystery of the kingdom of God, hidden to others, was revealed to them[1] gradually, by a patient initiation which tired not of their slowness to understand or believe: and, what is still better, the heart of the Master, ever expanding more fully, infused itself into their hearts, penetrating them with that all-powerful sweetness[2] at which Saint Paul was afterwards to marvel, and which is the special characteristic of divine operations. True children of Eternal Wisdom, nourished by turns with the milk and the wine which It pours into souls, in proportion to their progressing strength, they approached the day when they should hear the words: "You are the salt of the earth and the light of the world."[3] But there was due to them a further consecration, which separated them absolutely from the rest of the disciples, and made them fellow-workers pledged to the Master in preaching and the ministry of souls. They received it in the course of the second year, after that species of novitiate which they had made while preaching and baptising, under the watchful care and guidance of Jesus, without a mission which should remove them from Him and leave them to their own initiative. "The eagle still bore its young upon

[1] Matth., XIII, 11; — Mark, IV, 11; — Luke, VIII, 10.

[2] Sap., VIII, 1: "Ad finem fortiter disponit omnia suaviter."

[3] Matt., V, 13–15: "Vos estis sal terrae .... Vos estis lux mundi."

its wings, teaching them to fly,"[1] without however committing them to space where they might be dashed to pieces.

Their propitious hour struck during a mission in Galilee, where miracles were multiplied before their eyes,[2] and the number of proselytes, Jews, Galileans, Syrians, and Idumeans was marvellously increased.[3] John the Baptist was in prison and his disciples had dispersed: the Pharisees approached the Herodians to treat of Jesus Himself and His followers. The future, so fraught with evil forebodings, seemed to demand a more complete organisation of the forces that Truth itself launched for the conquest of souls. Like a skilful commander, Jesus at once formed the groundwork of His army, by creating the Apostolic College. On the morrow of a night spent in prayer[4] on the hill of Kourn-Hattin,[5] between Capharnaum and Tiberias, He gathered the disciples around Him, and chose from among them twelve of His oldest companions, to whom He gave the name of Apostles or Messengers.[6] This number of twelve answered apparently to that of

[1] Deuter, XXXII, 11: "Sicut aquila provocans ad volandum pullos suos, etc."

[2] Matth., IV, 23–35; — Mark, III, 7; — Luke, VI, 17–19.

[3] Mark, III, 7–8: "From Galilee and Judea, and from Jerusalem, and from Idumea, and from beyond the Jordan: and they about Tyre and Sidon."

[4] Luke, VI, 12.

[5] Called also the *Mountain of the Beatitudes* by the Christians.

[6] Luke, VI, 13: "Vocavit discipulos suos et elegit duodecim ex ipsis (quos et apostolos nominavit).

the tribes of Israel,[1] — who were the figure of the new people of God, marching under the patronage of their twelve patriarchs, to seek the true Promised Land of the Heavenly Jerusalem. Without pausing to discuss the numerous reasons that Mystics have assigned for this number (dear to the Apostles themselves, as was apparent by the election of Matthias after the betrayal of Judas), we only submit here a grouping the more worthy of attention that it is the same in the Gospels and in the Acts.[2]

The twelve are divided into three groups, with a kind of hierarchy which supposes three chiefs, to use the sacred expression. The first, over which Peter presided, is composed of Andrew and the sons of Zebedee, James and John. The second, which has Philip for its director, is constituted of Bartholomew, Matthew, and Thomas. The third, under the leadership of James, brother of the Lord, is formed of the two sons of Alpheus and of the traitor Judas. The Synoptics are in perfect accord regarding the designation of the heads of the column: the order of the secondary nominations varies a little, according to motives that are easy to construe. Thus Andrew is named the first in Matthew and Luke, while he is last in Mark, on whom his and Peter's humility has imposed this arrangement. In the second list, Matthew is placed in the first rank, which Thomas occupies in the two other Gospels. In the third series,

[1] Corn. A Lapide, *in Matth.*

[2] Act. Apost., I, 13.

Luke places before Jude, Simon, whom he designates by the flattering epithet of Zealot, substituted for the less sympathetic title of Cananean, preferred by Mark and Matthew. The third Gospel and the Acts,[1] though they come from the same pen, do not follow the same order of secondary classification, which seems therefore to be of minor importance; while the perfect accord of the sacred writers in the names of the chiefs of each group, indicates a preference, the reason for which we must seek in the actual will of Jesus. Despairing of ever penetrating a secret of which the Evangelists offer no explanation, we content ourselves with portraying the most striking characteristics of the first princes of the Church, associated by Himself in the kingdom of Jesus-Christ in souls.

Peter, and Andrew his brother, were, as we have already said, natives of Tiberias, and supported themselves by fishing in the waters of the lake of Genezareth. Peter had married a woman of Capharnaum, and tradition tells us that of her was born a daughter of whom the Gospel does not speak. Andrew, in the beginning a disciple of John the Baptist, became the first disciple of Jesus, and performed the first act of proselytism in bringing Peter to the Messiah. He was not, however, called to the primacy, though the Master always showed him an affection that is easily perceived in the Gospels,[2] and which the Church has com-

[1] Cf. Luke, VI, 14–16, and Act. Apost., *loc. cit.*

[2] Mark, XIII, 3; — John, XII, 22 etc.

memorated by the celebrated words, "the Lord loved Andrew."[1]

James and John, sons of Zebedee, — who had married Salome, the niece of the Blessed Virgin — were also fishermen from Bethsaida, like Peter and Andrew. They lived in comfortable circumstances, which the Gospel recalls in speaking of the hired men employed in their boat,[2] and John seems to have maintained relations with the High Priests, to whose dwellings he had easy access.[3] Surnamed *Sons of Thunder*, they justified their name by the impetuosity of their character, the zeal of their faith, and the splendour of their apostolate. Jesus held them in particular affection, and associated them with Himself in the most remarkable circumstances of His life. But we cannot dismiss them with this brief sketch, and we shall encounter them again, in a study less unworthy of the favour in which the heart of the divine Friend held them.

Philip, the chief of the second apostolic group, merited this distinction by the date of his vocation, and the zeal which he had shown from the very beginning. Born at Bethsaida, he was married there, and had two daughters born to him, who had consecrated their virginity to God.[4]

[1] "Dominus dilexit Andream" (Offic. S. Andreae, ad XXX Nov.)

[2] Mark, I, 20: "In the ship with his hired men."

[3] John, XIII, 15: "And that disciple was known to the high priest."

[4] Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.*, cit Polycrates, Bishop of Ephesus. Some writers hold that this is a confusion between the

Becoming a disciple of the Precursor, he had not hesitated to follow the Messiah and to bring to Him Bartholomew his friend, and perhaps his brother, as some have thought,[1] but their opinion is not sufficiently convincing. Of simple disposition, a little slow of comprehension, but positive and practical, he seems to have possessed the Master's confidence in organising apostolic pilgrimages and establishing communication with strangers.[2] His name, of Hellenic form, has given rise to the supposition that he had relations with those Greeks who addressed him in the Temple, in order to gain admittance to Jesus. But this is, perhaps, merely a conjecture: Greek and Roman names could not have been uncommon in Palestine, since the conquest of Alexander and during the protectorate of Cæsar.

Bartholomew, who is generally identified with Nathaniel, was from Cana, of noble birth and learned in the science of the Scriptures. Upright and thoughtful, perhaps of somewhat rough exterior, but profoundly religious,[3] his worth is sufficiently established by the Master's testimony: "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile!"[4]

Thomas is well known to us by the generous

Apostle and the deacon of the same name, who had four daughters who were prophetesses. (Acts, XXI, 9.)

[1] Donaldson, (Jashar, p. 9) ap. Smith *Dictionary*, V *Philipp.*

[2] John, VI, 5–9; — XII, 20–22.

[3] Le Camus, *Vie de N.-S. Jesus-Christ.*

[4] John, I, 47.

words — "Let us also go, that we may die with Him,"[1] which he spoke to the Apostles when Jesus proposed to re-enter Judea after His excommunication, and almost on the eve of the betrayal of Judas. Ardent soul, who knew better how to love than to reason, prone to weakness but quick in overcoming it, Thomas maintains in history a character that excites our sympathy, in spite of the incredulity of which he is the popular type, but which he redeemed by a confession of faith at once prompt and beautiful.[2]

The name that closes the second series is that of Matthew, otherwise called Levi, son of Alpheus.[3] At the time of his vocation, he was employed in one of the offices for the collection of the tribute to Cæsar. Being a Galilean by residence if not by birth, and certainly an Israelite, his profession rendered him doubly odious in the eyes of his compatriots, who deemed that he had renounced his country and his God in submitting himself to the service of Cæsar. Even the benevolence of the Master towards him was a source of scandal to them, while it filled him with joy, courage, and zeal. The other Evangelists pass over his occupation as publican in silence, but his own humility draws attention to it,[4] as being the name by which the inhabitants of Capharnaum knew him.[5] The sacred texts are not concerned

[1] Id., XI, 16.

[2] John, XX, 24–29.

[3] Mark, II, 14: "Levi Alphaei."

[4] Matth., X, 3: "Matthaeus publicanus."

[5] The other Evangelists designate the publican by the name of Levi. (Mark, II, 14; — Luke, V, 27.)

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with him after his conversion, and his life is mingled with that of his brethren in the apostolate; but there came a day of distinction for him by the inspiration which dictated the first Gospel. Before leaving Palestine to evangelise the tribes on the shores of the Tigris and Euphrates, Matthew wrote in Hebrew the divine words "τα λόγια" — to borrow the expression of Papias.[1] He soon afterwards translated it into Greek himself, which text alone has been preserved, and from which our Vulgate is taken.[2] In a short time his book was circulated among the faithful, both in the East and West, and after eighteen centuries it is still the source from which souls desirous of tasting the water that springeth up into everlasting life,[3] — the teachings of the Incarnate Word, — may draw with delight. He is symbolically represented as a man with the wings of an angel, because he is especially the Evangelist of the Humanity of Jesus-Christ, whose geneology forms the beginning of his book.

The third series is placed under the patronage of James, the son of Alpheus, whose surname Less, or Little, applies either to his small stature or to his vocation, which came later than that of his nephew, the son of Zebedee. Remaining in obscurity during the whole of the Master's life, he emerged therefrom after Pentecost, when, having

[1] According to Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, III, 39.

[2] S. Jerome (De vir. illust., c. 3), regarded the name of the translator as uncertain. The question appears to have been decided in the manner we have stated.

[3] John, IV, 14.

become the first Bishop of Jerusalem and an object of veneration even to the Jews themselves,[1] he was the soul of the first council,[2] the defender of Paul,[3] the oracle of the "twelve tribes dispersed throughout the world,"[4] before rendering testimony by his martyrdom to the divinity of the Incarnate Word. This *brother of the Lord*[5] had had great difficulty in recognising the Messiah in the person of the Child whose birth he remembered, whose youthful years he had protected, and whose first manifestation at Cana he had admired but did not understand. Like his brothers Simon and Jude, he had remained in doubt long after he was called,[6] in consequence perhaps of the mysterious design by which the revelation of the Most-High was prohibited to flesh and blood.[7]

Jude had shared his resistance as he had shared his faith, his zeal, and his ministry. The Epistle that he has bequeathed to us is one of the most magnificent monuments of the apostolic doctrine. The surname of Thaddeus which he bears in the two first Gospels,[8] and which signifies the *man of*

[1] Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, II, 23.

[2] Act. Apost., XV, 13–21.

[3] Act. Apost., XV, 1–31; — Galat., I, 19.

[4] Epist. Jacob., I, 1: "Jacobus . . . . duodecim tribubus quae sunt in dispersione salutem."

[5] Galat., I, 19; "Jacobum fratrem Domini."

[6] John, VII, 5: "Neither did His brethren believe in Him."

[7] Matth., XVI, 17: "Because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but My Father who is in heaven."

[8] Matth,, X, 3; — Mark, III, 18.

heart, is singularly applicable to him, as the title of Zealot is to his brother Simon. Both of them were filled with a great zeal for the Law, and it would appear that his intense love of country had even induced Simon to join one of those Galilean societies which had been established for the preservation of national tradition, and the restoration of Jewish independence. In this manner, at least, commentators have interpreted his two surnames — the Zealot[1] and the Cananean.[2] Jude possessed the same impetuosity of character and feeling, but nothing points to his having initiated his brother in the choice of means by which he hoped to accomplish the salvation of Israel.

It would be too much to draw the reader's attention even once to the name of the Iscariot, if it did not recall the ineffable mercy which sought to move his treacherous heart when he saluted his Master in Gethsemani. Never was speech more heart-rending than this: "Friend, whereto art thou come?"[3] Sold for a few pence and betrayed by a kiss, Jesus could not but resolve, we would say, to cast aside this son of perdition.[4] How must He have loved His Apostles, who, under such circumstances, loved even the Apostle who betrayed Him! Shall it be given to us, even in Heaven, to see the depths of this abyss of tenderness, and to

[1] Luke, VI, 15.

[2] Matth., X, 4; — Mark, III, 18, — of *Kanna*, "zealous."

[3] Matth., XXVI, 50: "Amice, ad quid venisti?"

[4] John, XVII, 12. "Filius perditionis."

understand to what measure this folly of divine love for man, has attained?[1]

After having thus chosen them, Jesus gave them power over evil spirits, that they might cure all diseases and infirmities. Then He said to them: — "Going, preach, saying. The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand, Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out devils: gratis you have received, gratis give. Do not possess gold, nor silver, nor money in your purses, nor scrip for your journey, nor two coats, nor shoes, nor a staff; for the workman is worthy of his meat. And into whatsoever city or town you shall enter, enquire who in it is worthy: and there abide till you go thence. And when you come into a house, salute it, saying: Peace be to this house. And if that house be worthy, your peace shall come upon it; but if it be not worthy, your peace shall return to you. And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, going forth out of that house, or city, shake off the dust from your feet. Amen I say to you, it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrha, in the day of judgment, than for that city. — He that receiveth you, receiveth Me: and he that receiveth Me, receiveth Him that sent Me."[2] We give extracts from this beautiful discourse, merely to show the connection established by the Master between Himself and those whom He sent in the name of the Father,

[1] I. Cor., I, 23: "To the Jews a stumbling block, and to the gentiles foolishness."

[2] Matth., X, 5-42.

from whom He had received His mission. The ministry of the Apostles has then a divine character, which constitutes them, in the Father's eyes, co-heirs with Jesus-Christ,[1] and enables the Son of God to call them His friends,[2] — or, to borrow the tender appellation which He Himself uses — His little children,[3] the first-born of His intelligence and His heart.

The better to discern this fusion of souls, we should ponder on the overflowing tenderness which followed the last Supper, when the participation in the flesh and blood of the Master had, so to speak, imparted to the disciples something of His own divinity, effaced all distance, and levelled every obstacle between them and Him. More fully even than on the mountain or in the desert, within the solitude of the supper-room, He poured, in sweet caressing streams, His own soul into that of the Apostles, — completing the revelation of His designs and the formation of His fellow-workers, — explaining the past and revealing the future, — with the gentleness of a mother rather than of a friend, because they needed at once both strength and consolation. "If anyone love Me, he will keep My word — And the Paraclete, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring all things to your mind, whatsoever I shall have said to you.

[1] Rom., VIII, 17: "And if sons, heirs also; heirs indeed of God, and joint heirs with Christ."

[2] John, XV, 15: "I have called you friends."

[3] "Filioli" (Mark, X, 24, and John, XIII, 33).

Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you: not as the world giveth, do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be afraid. You have heard that I said to you: I go away, and I come again to you — As the Father hath loved Me, I also have loved you. Remain in My love — I will not now call you servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth. But I have called you friends; because all things whatsoever I have heard from My Father, I have made known to you. You have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you, and have appointed you, that you should go, and should bring forth fruit, and your fruit should remain; that whatsoever you shall ask of the Father in My name, He may give it you. — Hitherto you have not asked anything in My name: ask, and you shall receive, that your joy may be full. — And I say not to you, that I will ask the Father for you. For the Father Himself loveth you, because you have loved Me."[1]

And the Apostles replied with delight: "Behold, now Thou speakest plainly, and speakest no proverb. Now we know that Thou knowest all things, and that for Thee it is not needful that any man ask Thee: in this we believe that Thou camest forth from God."[2] A tender smile lingered on the Master's lips: "Now do you believe?" He said, "Behold, the hour cometh, and is now come, that you shall be dispersed every man to his own,

[1] John, XIV, 23 and following; — XV, 9 and following, etc.

[2] John, XVI, 29-30.

and shall leave Me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me. These things have I spoken to you that in Me you may have peace. In the world you shall have distress; but have confidence, I have overcome the world."[1]

A few hours afterwards, as He had foretold, Jesus was alone: the Apostles could not guard their hearts from fear, and they were all dispersed, with the exception of Peter, who was about to deny his Friend. John found himself alone at the foot of the cross, after having himself taken part in the flight of his companions. Was it then that their affection was not sincere? No: but, like the greater number of men, their nature was weak, and, disconcerted by this unforeseen disaster, they had yielded to the first constraint of fear. When the divine prisoner ordered the armed band to allow His disciples to pass unmolested,[2] these, seized with panic, fled in all directions, and hid themselves to evade the enemies. The day of Resurrection found them together again, but still alarmed, and so confused that they could not believe their eyes or their ears in the very presence of the Master, triumphant over death. However, their joy was great; their hearts expanded and their lips murmured with an accent at once full of humility and confidence, the words of Peter: "Lord, Thou knowest all things: Thou knowest that I love Thee!"[3] The forty succeeding days

[1] John, XVI, 31–33.

[2] John, XVIII, 8: "If, therefore, you seek Me, let these go their way."

[3] Id., XXI, 17: "Domine, tu omnia nosti, tu scis quia amo te."

restored to them in some measure the familiarity of the past; then the Ascension deprived them of it for ever, without in any way lessening their devotion, which Pentecost exalted even to heroism. The Holy Spirit, whom He had promised, filled them with light and strength, so that their pent-up energies burst forth on all who heard them — for the salvation of many,[1] — for the ruin also of some, such as the Chiefs of the priests, the Scribes, and the Pharisees, who persisted in their error and hatred.

Then, twelve years passed by, during which, persecuted but unshaken, they gave its form and definite constitution to the Church, in the very place where the Synagogue had proscribed the Redeemer. The time at length came when they should enlarge their sphere of action, burst the bonds of Jewish prejudice, and invite all nations to a participation in the Good Tidings. Gathered for the last time around Peter, who had been given as their chief, they agreed on the formulae of the Creed, and portioned the world among them. James the Less, consecrated Bishop of Jerusalem, remained in Palestine to defend the faith of Jesus-Christ, already sealed there by the blood of James the Greater. Andrew went to Scythia, John to Asia-Minor, Bartholomew and Thomas to the Indies, Jude and Simon to Armenia. Matthew reached Ethiopia. Philip took the road to Phrygia; Peter that to Rome, the capital of the world, where he should establish the throne of the

[1] Act. Apost., II, 41, and IV, 4.

supreme Pontiffs. The last year of the century, which saw Christianity spread over the whole world, found no more than two of its first propagators in existence. All, with the exception of John and Simon, slept in martyr's tombs, where the love of Him whom they had loved so much, had laid them. It was not long before Simon followed. John himself had paid the debt of suffering at Rome, before the Latin Gate, but miraculously preserved for other trials, he terminated his long career at Ephesus, repeating the words of the Master: "My little children, love one another! This is the precept of the Lord, and is sufficient for those who would understand it."[1] By a singular destiny the elder of the Sons of Thunder had, first among the Apostles, witnessed to his faith by his blood, and the younger, the last of the Evangelists, finished in the Apocalypse the cycle of the Apostolic teachings.[2]

Thus were justified in these pre-eminent friends of the Son of God, the words that He spoke to them on the evening of Holy Thursday: "Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends."[3] He died for their salvation: they died for His glory.

[1] S. Hier., *Comment. in Epist. ad Galatas*, III, 6.

[2] Saint John died in the year 102, sixty eight years after the Resurrection.

[3] John, XV, 13: "Majorem hac dilectionem nemo habet, ut animam suam ponat quis pro amicis suis."

Chapter II.

Saint Peter.

> "He saith to him again: Simon, son of John, lovest thou Me? He saith to Him: Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee."
>
> John, XXI, 16.

If all the Apostles were the friends of Jesus, all had not the same share in His affection. Their vocation, though similar in all, did not necessarily imply an equality of merit, nor consequently, an equal participation in the friendship of the Master. With the exception of the traitor Judas, none among them sold his devotion nor his fidelity; but they did not all manifest the same spontaneity, the same ardour, the same absolute surrender of self. Different in temperament and character, in disposition and deportment, each had in the eyes of Jesus, specially distinguishing features, from which He was justified in choosing at will, when wisdom and justice did not impose a preference. He loved them all with unbounded affection; but He loved some still more, whose names live in every memory, and whom we must study apart if we would understand the depths of His love. It is, in fact, by these preferences that the heart reveals itself, and, according to the words of Scripture, we must seek it where we know its treasure is.[1] But Peter

[1] Luke, XII, 34: "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

is always given the first place by the Evangelists, and we find the reason not only in the primacy which made him head of the Apostolic College, but also in the evident predilection of which he is the object. The sons of Zebedee shared in this predilection, but under very different conditions, as we shall see when we have studied the part alloted to the first Vicar of Jesus Christ.

From the time that John the Baptist had said to them: "Behold the Lamb of God," Andrew and John joined the Redeemer, and spent the day on which they had come to know Him in His company. His first disciples, they were also the first Apostles, and each forthwith brought another adherent to the kingdom of God. The Gospel, which leaves us to surmise the intervention of John with his brother James, affirms that of Andrew with his brother also. "We have found the Messiah," he said to Simon, and at once proposed to bring him to Jesus. Simon made no objection and asked for no delay; he went as Andrew had gone, — believing in the word of his brother as Andrew had believed in the word of the Precursor. Jesus looked upon him and said: "Thou art Simon, the Son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is interpreted Peter," and the alliance was sealed for ever between the Son of God and him who, after the Messiah, should become the universal Pastor.[1]

It is in the simplicity of these incidents that the inspiration of the Gospel is apparent; the greatest things are here set forth with so little

[1] John, I, 35–42.

parade, that we might feel inclined to be astonished, did we not know that divine works would but be disfigured by any pomp of human language. Thus, nothing more could be said of the first meeting between Jesus and Peter, without lessening its charm and grandeur.

The man who came in this way to join the Messiah was born at Bethsaida,[1] on the shores of the lake of Genezareth, and lived at Capharnaum[2] with his brother Andrew, himself also a fisherman. Their station in life was extremely humble, if we may judge by the care which the Gospel takes to present them to us alone in their boat, while the crew of Zebedee comprised, in addition to his sons, several hired sailors.[3] They belonged, however, to a family that could count back its ancestors to Simeon, the son of Jacob.[4] Andrew was not married, but Peter had wedded the daughter of a certain Aristobubulus, whose brother, Barnabas, has sometimes been confounded with the apostle of the same name.[5] Metaphrastes[6] calls Perpetua the wife by whom Peter had two children, a son and a daughter, who died, as did their mother, before his call to the Apostolate.[7] Remaining a widower, he

[1] John, I, 44. — Now El-Tabighah, which must not be confounded with Bethsaida-Julias, situated on the north of the lake, in Gaulanitis.

[2] Matth., VIII, 14; — Mark, I, 29.

[3] Mark, I, 20.

[4] Greek MS. of the *Biblioth. Nation.* cited by the Bollandists, on the 29. June.

[5] *Ibid.*, and on the 31. May.

[6] Ap. Surius, Vit. SS. — Cf. Giry, *Vie des Saints.*

[7] Act. SS. loc. cit. — *Comment. praevius.* — These

had continued to live with his mother-in-law, and, freed from all interest in the attractions of the world, he had lent a willing ear to the preachings of John the Baptist, and awaited henceforth the coming of the Redeemer.

He was a little younger than Jesus, and had scarcely reached his thirtieth year when they met on the banks of the Jordan.[1] He was therefore in the full vigour of life and complete possession of his faculties, rather than approaching old age, as he is customarily represented to us. Of quick intelligence and generous heart, he had one of those ardent temperaments of which a sad experience of life draws out the full force, but which are necessary to all difficult and beneficial undertakings; in the hands of the Master he should become a capable instrument for the accomplishment of those designs which he so quickly understood, and to which he devoted all the energy of his nature. After the marriage feast of Cana he returned to Capharnaum, and during the intervals between the journeys on which Jesus summoned them, he continued his life as a fisherman on the waters of the lake, with Andrew and the sons of Zebedee. The Master found him there at the commencement of

children, sometimes called Mark and Petronilla, seem to have been confounded with a spiritual son and daughter of Saint Peter. The legend of the martyrdom of Perpetua, who died for her faith in Jesus Christ, is still less credible, although very ancient. (V. Gabourd, Hist. de Saint Pierre, ch. XXIII.)

[1] Cf. Acta SS., loc. cit.

the second year of His public life,[1] under circumstances which we have already described, and attached him thenceforth to His person in a very special manner. No one has ever questioned the preference in which he was held from the first day, and which was affirmed by the Master's having chosen his boat, from which He preached to the people;[2] a preference so much the more remarkable that Peter was not the first, as regards time, among the disciples, Andrew and John having preceded him in their submission to the Messiah. However, he had been welcomed with a favour of which no trace is visible in the reception given to the other two, who, though destined for a friendship of choice, had no primacy conferred on them: he was already designated as the foundation stone on which the edifice of the future should be raised.[3] We do not find anywhere that Jesus officially appointed him at this time to the first place, but throughout the whole of the Gospel narrative we feel that he occupies it, with the consent of the other Apostles, none of whom dreamt of contesting his right of precedence. Long before his official consecration the supremacy of Peter was an accomplished fact for his colleagues in the apostolate, and in the government of souls.

To what did he owe it? To his simplicity, and

[1] In the spring of the year 32, and probably in the month of March.

[2] Luke, V, 3: "And going up into one of the ships, that was Simon's etc."

[3] John, 1, 42: "Thou shalt be called Cephas: which is interpreted Peter."

to the ardour and constancy of his faith. He does not appear to have been one of the regular disciples of John the Baptist, like his brother Andrew, who held no part in the family duties, and who, according to certain Hagiographers, had placed himself among the followers of the Precursor. Therefore he had not been, like Andrew and John, prepared by the Baptist's instructions for the knowledge and service of the Messiah, so that his adherence was particularly spontaneous. He awaited the Liberator, believed in His immediate coming, trusted the word of Andrew, and surrendered himself willingly to Him whom his brother pointed out. In so doing he obeyed his generous and loyal nature, his eager Galilean aspirations for the restoration of Israel, the confidence natural to weary hearts, and above all, the belief that God might have fixed upon this hour for the realisation of the prophecies. It was not for him, he considered, to question whether the coming of the Messiah was opportune, nor to refuse to verify His advent. He went then, not defiant but prudent, in all simplicity and goodwill, on the word of John the Baptist and Andrew, where they told him they had found Christ the Lord.

God reveals Himself to such upright souls at once, if not in the fulness of knowledge, at least sufficiently to satisfy them and to bind them to Himself; it was thus with Simon. From the moment he stood in the presence of Jesus he saw, so to speak, the heart of the Master, and understood that he had a place there; but at the same

time he had an immediate perception of the Messiah, superior to that which had been given to Andrew — an intuition which drew from him the sublime protestation; "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God." This cry, which he should remember a long time, was already on his lips when Jesus found him, on the shores of the lake, and asked him to cast his nets again. It is the meaning of his words, so full of humble faith: "Master, we have laboured all the night, and have taken nothing: but at Thy word I will let down the net." It is also the meaning of the words that followed the miraculous draught: "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord."[1] He was the first of the disciples who had recognised that Jesus was more than man, the master of all minds, the Lord to whom all should pay homage, the Holy One of God foretold by the prophets, the Redeemer expected by Israel.

After his definite vocation, Peter could not but progress in faith, and by faith in love. For the same reason he should advance rapidly in the friendship of the Master, and become His other self in universal esteem, and in the propagation of the kingdom of God. Henceforth also, we see him in the first rank, with a kind of official consecration, even before the declaration at Caesarea which should leave no doubt as to his future primacy. When the Saviour consented to enter the house of

[1] Luke, V, 5 and 8: "Praeceptor, per totam noctem laborantes, nihil cepimus: in verbo autem tuo laxabo rete . . . Exi a me, quia homo peccator sum, Domine."

Jairus at Capharnaum, to raise the daughter of the prince of the Synagogue to life, He took with Him Peter, James, and John; but the first selected, he who followed Him closest, was Peter, as the Gospel teaches us in a delightful picture. While they were going, a poor woman, lost in the crowd that pressed about Him, having succeeded in touching the mantle of Jesus, He said at once: "Who hath touched my garments?" To which Peter hastened to reply: "Thou seest the multitude thronging Thee, and sayest Thou, Who hath touched Me?"[1] Jesus must have smiled at the apostle's reply, in which He saw a proof of the vigilance of Peter, and perhaps also of the vexation which he felt at her seeming boldness. For the ardour of Simon sometimes led to a secret indignation at the importunities of men, and the difficulties, present or to come, that beset the Master's way.

Thus, when Jesus repeatedly announced His approaching Passion which was soon to be followed by His Resurrection, Peter, thinking only of the humiliation and death of his divine Friend, took Him aside and said to Him eagerly: "Lord, be it far from Thee; this shall not be unto Thee." — And Jesus replied severely: "Go after Me, Satan, thou art a scandal unto Me: because thou dost not relish the things that are of God, but the things that are of men."[2] The reproach must have been doubly severe on Peter, since it immediately followed the promise of the primacy that he should exercise in the Church.

[1] Mark, V, 30–31; — Luke, VIII, 45.

[2] Matth., 21–23; — Mark, VIII, 31–33.

The Master, in fact, had put to His disciples the celebrated question: "Whom do men say that the Son of Man is?" And the Apostles had replied: "Some say that Thou art John the Baptist, and others Elias; and others Jeremias, or one of the prophets." Jesus said to them: "But whom do you say that I am?" Peter immediately answered in the name of all: "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God." — Then Jesus replied: "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona, because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but My Father who is in heaven. And I say to thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose upon earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven."[1]

This happened on the way to Cesarea Philippi, on the shores of the lake of Tiberias which had already witnessed the apostle's vocation, and where he was soon to be confirmed in the supreme ministry of souls.[2] It was for Peter the most cherished spot on earth. On these waters he had taken the miraculous draught that typified the capture of men brought to the shores of truth. These waves had borne the barque from which the Saviour had taught the multitude, and which symbolised the barque of the Church; the apostle had taken from

[1] Matth., XVI, 13–19.
[2] John, XXI, 15–17.

their bosom the fish, in whose mouth was concealed the mysterious stater that was destined to pay the tribute for Christ and His Vicar;[1] on the bounding billows of this lake the Master and His disciple had walked,[2] and the divine word had reduced them to peace at the appeal of Peter and his companions.[3] But this shore was also to hear the prophecy of the martyrdom by which the apostle consummated his resemblance to the Redeemer,[4] and this was not certainly the least of the many blessings which it saw flowing from heaven into the heart of this privileged being.

We shall not follow him through all the ways of Palestine that he traversed with such courage during the remainder of the apostolic life of Jesus, — always in the first place, whether in the joys of Thabor[5] or the sorrows of persecution,[6] having only one desire, — to be near the Master, were it but to go with Him to prison, or even to death,[7] as he protested on the evening of Holy Thursday, with a persistence which bore witness to his ardour rather than to his prudence. Certainly he was not wanting in humility. A few moments before, he would not allow Jesus to wash his feet, and submitted only under threat that otherwise he should have no part with Him in Heaven.[8] But this most

1 Matth., XVI, 23–26.
2 Matth., XIV, 24–32.
3 Id., VIII. 23–26.
4 John, XXI, 18–19.
5 Matth., XVII, 1–8.
6 John, VI, 69, and 40 etc.
7 Matth., XXVI, 33–35; — Mark, XIV, 29–31 etc.
8 John, XIII, 5–9.

sincere humility did not prevent his believing himself strong enough to brave all the perils that his love might involve. The sublime ministry for which God had destined him exacted, however, in the eyes of those whom he should guide, a tendency to the indulgence which brought about the hard and humiliating lessons of the following night.[1] Disconcerted and surprised, Peter denied his Master and his Friend, not that he had ceased to love Him, says Saint Leo, but because of the trouble into which his imprudence had brought him and the fear consequent upon it.[2] None the less had he learnt to his cost how imperfect is the wisdom, and how inadequate the courage of those who are not fortified by divine light and strength. Thus "the remembrance of his fall taught him to temper, with mercy and patience, the firmness he should display in administering correction to others."[3] Who knows if the traditional forbearance of the Apostolic See — what is sometimes called its dilatoriness — may not be traced back to Peter's error, to the lesson that he drew from it, even to the grace that redeemed him?

It was on the shores of the lake of Genezareth that this reparation took place, by the triple protestation of his love, and the triple mission that Jesus gave him to feed the lambs and sheep of His flock, that is, the faithful and their pastors. And

[1] Matth., XXVI, 69–75; — Mark, XIV, 66–72; — Luke, XXII, 55–62.

[2] S. Leon, *Serm. de Passione:* "Abundavit fletus ubi *non deficit affectus:* et fons charitas lavit *verba formidinis.*

[3] Louis Veuillot, *Jesus-Christ,* second part, c. VIII.

in order to seal the pardon and ratify anew, and more strikingly, the resemblance between Himself and His Vicar, the Master predicted his death by the cross, — so it has been interpreted by the beloved disciple who witnessed the fact.[1] Henceforth there could be no possible doubt as to the supremacy of Peter, which was confirmed, so to speak, in every subsequent act. After the Ascension, it is Peter who assembles the Apostolic College, to fill the place forfeited by Judas.[2] It is he who, on the morning of Pentecost, is the first to preach the Gospel message, overflowing from a soul now filled with the Holy Spirit, and who gains for the Church the first proselytes of the new era.[3] It is he who gives testimony, in the name of the Apostles, before the Sanhedrin, to which he bids defiance in his *non possumus*, that has since become the official formula of Pontifical resistance to the demands of error and evil.[4] It was at his feet that Ananias and Sapphira fell when they dared to lie to the Holy Ghost;[5] — to him the revelation is made, at Joppa, which determines the calling of the Gentiles to the Gospel, and which definitely sunders the ties that bind the Church to the Synagogue.[6] He excels the other Apostles even in the glory of a miracle, in which, however, they largely

[1] John, XXI, 18–19.

[2] Act. Apost., I, 15 and following.

[3] Id., II, 14–41.

[4] Id., IV, 20: "*Non enim possumus* quae vidimus et audivimus non loqui."

[5] Id., V, 1–11.

[6] Act. Apost., X, 10–17.

shared, and his passing shadow suffices to heal the sick on whom it falls.[1] Like the Master, virtue went out from him,[2] which vivified and ennobled all that it touched, and they who are joined to him in faith are assured of eternal life.[3]

When he had evangelised Judea, he went to Asia-Minor, through which he travelled in all directions, as is shown by his first Epistle addressed to the Christians of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia,[4] and Bithynia.[5] At this period his basis of action was Antioch, where he had fixed his See, according to the constant tradition of the Church, and where he lived about seven years, leaving it only at the demands of his Apostolic ministry, and from whence he directed the works of his coadjutors. Barnabas was soon to join him, with Saul, the murderer of Saint Stephen, whom divine grace had thrown prostrate on his way to Damascus, and whom the Twelve had admitted into the Church, under the thrice-illustrious name of Paul, the Apostle of the Nations. It was then that the disciples at Antioch took, or received, the denomination of Christians, which shall not pass away for ever.[6]

[1] Id., V, 15: "That when Peter came, his shadow at the least might overshadow any of them."

[2] Luke, VI, 19: "Virtus de illo exibat."

[3] John, XI, 26: "And everyone that liveth, and believeth in Me, shall not die for ever."

[4] That is to say, the country boardering the coast, from the Hellespont to the Pamphylian Sea (Gulf of Adalia).

[5] Epist. Peter, I, 1.

[6] Act. Apost., XI, 26.

Returning to Jerusalem, recalled perhaps by the inevitable fear into which the hatred of Herod-Agrippa had thrown the faithful, he arrived there in time to mourn with them the death of James the Greater.[1] and soon fell himself into the hands of the tyrant. His death had been previously resolved upon; no trial intervened, and his execution was merely postponed until after the feast of the Pasch, which was at hand. Bound by chains and guarded by four quaternions of soldiers, the apostle was shut up in a prison secured by an iron door, before which a picket kept watch. Agrippa believed himself quite sure of his prisoner, and laughed at the misery of the Christians, whose only resource was in prayer for their chief. But one night, when Peter slept tranquilly, awaiting his execution, — happy in the very thought that he was soon to rejoin his Master in glory, — an angel entered the dungeon and filled it with his splendour. He awoke Peter, saying: "Arise quickly, gird thyself, and put on thy sandals; cast thy garment about thee, and follow me." The chains fell off, and the apostle followed, as one in a dream, the divine messenger before whom the gates opened, while the guards remained unconscious of what was passing. At the end of the first street the angle disappeared, and Peter, recovering from his surprise, knocked at the door of Mary's[2] house, where many of the disciples were assembled in prayer. A ser-

[1] Act. Apost., XII, 1–2.

[2] Mary, the Mother of John, surnamed Mark, who was later on the companion of the Apostles Paul and Barnabas.

vant named Rose[1] came to see who had knocked, and frantic with joy, forgot to open the door till she had announced the glad news. No one would believe her, until at length, the knocks being redoubled, they opened the gate: it was indeed the Prince of the Apostles, who told them to warn James the Less, Bishop of Jerusalem, and immediately left to seek a safer asylum. Herod sent a band in pursuit, but not being able to recapture him, he ordered the sentinels who had allowed him to escape to be put to death; then Herod hastily left Judea for Cesarea, where he was soon to perish by a death as painful as it was humiliating, after a last act of foolish impiety.[2]

The Apostles were then allowed a moment's respite, during which the faith was spread anew. However, the Jews resented the admission into the Church of those neophytes who were not obliged to conform to the Law of Moses. Some among them who had belonged to the Pharisees, even demanded the circumcision of the new converts. It became then necessary to examine into this question, and the Apostles assembled with the Ancients, under the presidency of Peter.[3] After making known the results achieved by Paul and Barnabas among the Gentiles, James the Less spoke, and plainly demanded that the neophytes should be left in peace. His advice was accepted by his colleagues, and the Ancients, who made it

[1] "Rhode, Ῥόδη."

[2] Act. Apost., XII, 1–24.

[3] Act. Apost., XV, 7.

known to the Church, using for the first time the formula henceforth adopted in the councils: "It hath seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us."[1] Peace and joy thus took possession of all souls, and the kingdom of God was extended with even greater rapidity, if not among the disciples of Moses, at least among the children of the Gentiles.

But the lull did not last long, and it was deemed necessary that the apostles should disperse. After having formulated the Creed,[2] the Twelve, guided by the Holy Ghost, divided the world among them, and set out in quest of souls, to every quarter of the globe! Peter went to Rome, accompanied by Mark, who was to write the second Gospel — by Appolinaris, who became Bishop of Ravenna — by Martial, the Apostle of Aquitaine — and by Rufus, the founder of the See of Capua. Tradition tells us that he came to Sicily, and the inhabitants of Naples still revere the place where he celebrated the sacred mysteries. The voyage was made by easy stages, according to Eusebius and Saint Jerome, who state that Peter entered Rome in the year 44, the second of the reign of Claudius.[3] He was, then, absent from Palestine for two years, and while travelling preached all along his way.[4]

[1] Act. Apost., XV, 28: "Visum est enim Spiritui sancto et nobis."

[2] Rufin, *Comment. in Symbol.* 2. (*Patrol. lat.*, t. XXI.) — S. Ambrose, *Serm.* XXXVIII. — Cf. Fouard, *Saint Pierre*, c. XIII, etc.

[3] The 28. January, according to tradition. — It is the day on which the *Chair of St. Peter at Rome* is commemorated.

[4] According to the generally accepted opinion, which fixes the martyrdom of James the Greater in the year 42, at the latest.

His first sojourn at Rome was not of long duration, Claudius having expelled, in the year 52, all the Jews, to whatsoever religion they belonged. Having hidden for some time in the catacombs of the Ostrian cemetery, Peter returned to Palestine, whence he again set out for Italy after the accession of Nero. Metaphrastes traces him this time through Egypt and Africa, hastening on the way, because he was eager to confront that formidable enemy of the Christian Name — Simon Majus, who had been recently summoned to Rome by the new Caesar.[1] Perhaps he also desired to visit his disciple Mark, who was then preaching to the Alexandrians; and also those whom he had sent, according to the testimony of Saint Cyprian, to Mauritania and Numidia. However that may be, on his return to Rome in the year 54, he found there, Simon, whose arts had so profoundly puzzled the Ancients, and whom it is necessary we should know better, without in any way attaching undue importance to him.

Majus was a Samaritan, but by adoption only, for Josephus says he was of the tribe of Levi, and came originally from Cyprus.[2] He had great influence among his fellow-citizens, owing to his deceptions and the mysterious assertions regarding his nature and his birth, which he affirmed to be superhuman. He had been baptised at the time of

[1] Cf. S. Hieron., De viris illustribus. — The holy Doctor differs here from Metaphrastes, in supposing that Simon was already in Rome at the time of Claudius.

[2] According to S. Justin (Apol., I, 29), he came from Gitta, a village at the borders of Samaria.

Philip the Deacon's preaching, and when the Apostles Peter and John came to confirm the neophytes, he was astounded at the miracles wrought by the power of the Holy Ghost. Comparing these wonders with the sorceries by which he had blinded Samaria, he could not remain long in doubt as to their superiority. From this conviction, to the desire of possessing the power to bring down the Holy Spirit of God, there was but one step, quickly surmounted by the ambition of the false neophyte, who did not hesitate to offer money to the Apostles, to pay for the honour of the priesthood. Peter replied with indignation: "May thy money perish with thee, because thou hast esteemed the gift of God to be purchased with money. Thou hast no part nor lot in this matter; for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. Do penance, therefore, for this thy wickedness, and pray to God, that perhaps this thought of thy heart may be forgiven thee. For I see thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bonds of iniquity." Terrified by this anathema, Simon appeared to repent and supplicated the apostle to pray that he might not be overtaken by divine vengeance.[1] But his conversion did not last long. He took once more the name that had been formerly given him — *the Great Power of God*, — recommenced to preach his agnostic doctrine, in which he had borrowed the elements of the school of Dositheus; and ended in representing to the neighbouring people of Tyre, where he had taken refuge, a

[1] Act. Apost., VIII, 9-24.

courtesan named Helen, as the *Ennoia*, or the eternal thought of God, banished to earth and degraded in its union with human nature, of which he himself was the Redeemer.[1] He claimed to have been announced as such by the oracle of Moses: "The Lord thy God will raise up to thee a Prophet of thy nation and of thy brethren like unto me: him thou shalt hear."[2] He was the Messiah, and had completed the revelation of supernatural truth as well as the regeneration of souls.[3] — If our modern agnostics did not seek to revive these absurdities, it might be considered impossible that they could ever have been popular.[4] But they exercise a considerable ascendancy over those minds that are seduced by this mixture of mysticism and sensuality, which still holds such powerful sway over misguided souls.

Simon at length came to Rome, attracted by the favour shown by Nero towards magicians and the magic arts, perhaps even sent for by him. His reputation there was soon of such consideration that a statue was erected in his honour, and there were not wanting those who regarded him as a divinity.[5] But on Peter's arrival the aspect of things was changed. "The fame of the imposter was at once extinguished; his power was paralysed,

[1] Cf. *Philosophumena*, V, 98.

[2] Deuter, XVIII, 15,

[3] S. Irenaeus, *Adv. Haeres.*, I, 23, 3.

[4] Certain German Doctors do not believe in the actual existence of Simon. (V. Baur, Gnosis; — Hilgenfeld, *Die Clement. Recognitionen*, — etc.)

[5] Cf. Eusebius, cit. S. Justin and S. Irenaeus.

and he fell into the obscurity which was the fate of so many religious and philosophical sects. To bring about this change, Peter did not require to perform any great wonders before the emperor and the assembled people. The grace of Jesus Christ was with him: the demons, fearing him as much as the Saviour, fled at Rome as they had formerly fled in Galilee, and with them vanished the prestige of their dupe. It was by humility that Peter achieved his triumph."[1]

These last words allude to the legend vouched for by the Fathers of the fourth century,[2] and which the Apocryphal Acts of Peter and Paul[3] give in more complete detail. In this legend, it would appear that Simon undertook to raise himself into the air in presence of Nero and the Roman people. But at the prayer of Saint Peter he was abandoned by the demons who supported him, fell to the ground, and was wounded so severely that he died two days afterwards at Ariccia. Obscure passages of Suetonius[4] and of Dion Chrysostom[5] have for a long time recommended this legend to the learned; but recent works, among which we must place a Dissertation by the Abbé Duchesne in the first rank, have considerably shaken, if not altogether upset its authority; and the fall of Simon, though still extensively believed, has not been able to maintain the character attributed to it.

1 Fouard, St. Pierre, c. XVIII.
2 Arnobius (305), S. Cyril of Jerusalem (347), etc.
3 Ap. Tischendorf, *Acta Apostolorum Apocrypha*.
4 *Nero*, XII.
5 *Orat.*, XXI, 9.

Having now conquered this heresiarch, Peter gave all his attention to the organisation of the Roman Church, and to the propagation of the Gospel — especially in Italy, Gaul, and Spain. From Aquilea to Capua the peninsula was visited by his emissaries, who founded the greater number of the large Italian Sees. In Gaul, Martial watched over the birth of Christianity in the centre and north; in Spain, the same activity and the same success attended the mission of the successors of James the Greater and Ctesiphon.

In Rome itself, Peter preached as he had in Judea, setting forth in simple language the life and teachings of the divine Master, and "in similar terms repeated each day a sort of historical catechism to the neophytes."[1] Mark collected these discourses "exactly, but without order." He is not to blame if he has but preserved a few characteristics, which his memory retained, for he was merely anxious "to omit nothing that he had himself heard, and to allow nothing false to escape him."[2] Mark was, therefore, a simple echo of the instructions of Peter: this is why Saint Justin aptly calls his Gospel "the Memoirs or the Recollections of Peter."[3] Saint Irenaeus, Origen, and Clement of Alexandria held the same opinion, and conjectured that Mark had acted of his own accord when he drew out and published his work, "which, when it had come to his knowledge, Peter,

[1] Fouard, *Saint Pierre*, c. XX, — cit. the priest John, quoted by Papias (Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.* III, 39, 15.).

[2] Fouard, *Saint Pierre.*

[3] *Dialog.*, CVI.

neither defended nor encouraged."[1] Let us add, however, that according to Eusebius, who quotes the "Institutions" of Clement, Peter was delighted with the effect that Mark's Gospel produced, and authorised the reading of it in the churches.[2]

Converts grew more numerous, not only among the people but in higher circles, as is proved by the allusion of the same Clement to the knights of the house of Caesar, who attended the preaching of the Prince of the Apostles.[3] The Palatine, in fact, was not closed against the spirit of God, as the Epistle to the Philippians proves, in which Saint Paul salutes the Christians under the name of the "saints who are of Caesar's house."[4] When the Apostle of the Gentiles came, in the year 61, to join the Vicar of Jesus Christ at Rome, he received a kind welcome from his brethren, and his captivity was sweetened by the respect even of those who guarded his person. The Jews were not so kind; on the contrary, he was forced to break with the Synagogue of Rome, as he had with those of Jerusalem, of Asia-Minor, and of Greece.[5]

The two Apostles worked henceforth in common, each in his own particular sphere. Paul,

[1] Clement of Alexandria, quoted by Eusebius (Hist. eccles., VI, 14).

[2] Eusebius (op. cit., II, 15), cit. Clem. Alex., *Instit.* VI.

[3] "Quibusdam Caesaraenis equitibus." (*Adumbratio* ad I Epist. Petri.)

[4] Philipp., IV, 22: "Salutant vos omnes sancti, maxime autem qui de Caesaris domo sunt."

[5] Act. Apost., XXVIII, 16–30.

practically a prisoner for two years, preached especially in the Pretorium and to those who were imprisoned there. Peter, more at liberty, had relations with all, particularly with the populace and slaves, as his solicitude for them in his Epistles clearly manifests. He had ceased to live with his compatriots, being suspected by the zealots of the Law, and at once went to lodge on the Aventine in the house of Priscilla and Aquila, whose names are found in the Acts and in the Epistles of Saint Paul.[1] From the Aventine he went to live in the Vicus Patricius on the Viminal, and finally he retired to the Ostrian cemetery, between the Via Salaria and the Via Nomentana. It is to this last place he went when he returned to Rome, and here he baptised in the waters of the swampy region called the Marsh of the Goats,[2] (surrounding the basilica of Saint Agnes). He was thus near the Pretorian camp where Paul had some influence, and could lend a hand to his fellow-worker. The captivity of the Apostle of the Gentiles ended in the year 63, and he profited by his freedom to leave Rome and visit Spain,[3] which tradition tells us he reached through the south of Gaul. He worked in this new mission for six years with his usual success. Unfortunately, persecution soon overtook him and he was forced to rejoin Peter at

[1] Act. Apost., XVIII, 2, 25 and 26; — Rom, XVI, 3-4; — II Tim., IV, 19.

[2] "In via Nomentana, in caemeterio majore."

[3] Saint Clement of Rome, in an Epistle cited by Denys, first Bishop of Corinth, and which Eusebius (IV, 22) says was read even in his time in all churches.

Rome, where there was less danger. The conflagration kindled by Nero, and attributed by him to the Christians, had been the occasion of a tremendous outburst of rage, which Tacitus has described for us.

The zeal and miracles of the Apostles should, sooner or later, bring upon them the hatred of their persecutors. Nero had gone to Achaia, with the intention of presiding at the opening of the Isthmus of Corinth; but he had left as his representatives the Prefects Tigellus and Nymphidius, both worthy servants of such a master. When the first news of the insurrection at Jerusalem, and the check of Cestius Gallus reached Rome,[1] the two Prefects ordered the arrest of the principal representatives of the Jewish nation, and amongst them the two Apostles Peter and Paul, who were justly regarded as two of the most prominent. Saint John Chrysostom tells us there was this particular grievance against them, that they had converted to the faith one of the chief officials of the Imperial palace, who was also one of Nero's favourites. In any case, after a nominal trial they were thrown into the Mamertine prison, which they left only to be executed.

Two dungeons placed one over the other constituted this ante-chamber of death. The first (carcer interior) dating from the time of Ancus Martius, according to Titus Livius, had no other opening than an air-hole in the roof, by which also the prisoners descended. The second (carcer

[1] October 66.

inferior) hollowed out by Servius Tullius, from whom came its name Tullianum, measured scarcely two metres in height, by six long and three wide. In this anticipated sepulchre had perished the accomplices of Cataline, the kings Jugurtha, Aristobulus, Tigranus, and our Vercingetorix. Those who were here incarcerated suffered the *custodia arcta et obscura*, until they were delivered by death or by an unforeseen release.[1]

The Apostles occupied these two dungeons of the Mamertine prison successively, guarded by Processus and Martinianus, whom they soon converted. As there was no water to baptise these neophytes, a spring miraculously gushed from the earth, which still pours out its salutary freshness for the devotion of pilgrims. The piety of these new converts would at all cost protect the head of the Church from the death that threatened him. He ardently desired martyrdom, and with Paul exclaimed: "I am straitened . . . having a desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ."[2] But the faithful pressed him so eagerly to provide for the necessities of the time, by hiding himself for a little, that he consented to fly from the prison and the city. He travelled towards the south, by the Three Taverns and the coast, in order to gain Pozzuoli, the port where Paul had formerly landed in Italy, and where he had many friends.[3] As he was leaving Rome and had set forth upon the

[1] Rich. *Diction.*, V. *Carcer.* — Goyau, *Lexique*, V. *Carcer.*

[2] Philipp., I, 23.

[3] Act. Apost., XXVIII, 13–15.

Appian Way, he found himself with astonishment in presence of his divine Master. "Lord," he cried, "where goest Thou?[1] — I go to Rome to be crucified again!"

Gentle and severe reproach, which sank deep into the apostle's soul and pointed out his duty! He had failed to recognise the law of love, and had postponed the sacrifice it demanded; but with hasty steps he regained the Capitol, and the guardians of the Tullianum were compelled to return him to his chains and his dungeon. After nine months of captivity the capital sentence was pronounced; as he was a Jew, Peter must be crucified, while Paul, being a Roman citizen, must be beheaded. This took place on the 29th June in the year 67 — the fourteenth of the reign of Nero[2] — two years after the death of Seneca, according to Saint Jerome.[3] Before going to the place of execution, Peter blessed the disciples who were able to gain access to him, and in particular Clement, who was destined to succeed him on the Pontifical throne. "Do not fear," he said to him, "to undertake the government of the Church, on account of thy sins. Think rather that thou wouldst sin more grievously didst thou leave the people of God to perish in the waves, when thou couldst save them by thy courage. Thou shalt save thy own

[1] "Domine quo vadis?" An oratory commemorates the place of this meeting.

[2] Baronius (Annal.) says the XIII.

[3] Who appears to be mistaken by two years, according to Sepp. Seneca died during the consulate of Silius Nerva and Atticus Sestinus, the 12th year of the reign of Nero.

soul in bringing others to Heaven."—He likewise addressed a few special words to Nicetas, and to the wife of Albinus; then he blessed his brothers and gave himself up to the executioner, who first scourged both him and Paul, then led him to the Vatican Hill, while the Apostle of the Nations was taken to the Ostian Way. Arriving at the summit of the hill, at a point which commanded a view of the entire city, the Campagna, and the Alban hills, Peter was stripped of his garments and nailed to the cross. His soul overflowed with joy at the thought that he should resemble in death the Master crucified for him, and he recalled with pleasure that Jesus himself had deigned to promise him this resemblance as a special pledge of pardon and love. But all at once a thought crossed his mind. Was it seemly that there should be no difference between him and the Man-God? In imploring accents he begged the lictors who were preparing to erect the cross, to change its position, so as to place the head downwards; this they granted with scornful indifference. What signified the posture of this slave on his gibbet? It signified much to him, for so his eyes could rest more easily upon the heavens and the place where the Son of Man dwelt, at the right hand of His Father. Doubtless he beheld him already, leaning forward, with a smile on His lips and palms in His hands. Happy son of Jonas, happier still than on the shores of the lake of Tiberias, for he was now on the threshold of eternal happiness, fully assured that his work on earth could not perish, and that

his death was the earnest of a triumph henceforth to be incessantly renewed in the Church! Of what moment were the sneers of the Jews in this quarter where he had been brought to die,[1] and who had braved their own terror in order to enjoy this last spectacle? He had no desire but to repeat, with his divine Friend: "Forgive them, for they know not what they do."

The martyr's body was taken away by the Christians,[2] who buried it in a catacomb near the gardens of Nero on the Aurelian Way. In this same place is now seen the famous dome suspended by Michael-Angelo, as a canopy over the tomb of the Galilean fisherman. No man, however great he may have been, sleeps in such a tomb, nor is guarded by so much love and so great veneration. The centuries pass by, without in any way diminishing the ardour that draws pilgrims from the four quarters of the globe to the threshold of this tomb, of which the sanctity is even more revered than its splendour is admired. Who can stifle his deep emotion when, raising his eyes to the vault, he sees, like a sparkling crown, the famous inscription: "Tu es Petrus et super hanc petram aedificabo Ecclesiam meam!" Here is the visible and palpable demonstration: *the stones cry out*,[3] according to the words of the Gospel, and louder

[1] Many Israelites inhabited this quarter, called the *Jewish Suburb*.

[2] Under the command of the priest Marcellus, who rendered him the last honours, according to the custom of his ancestors.

[3] Luke, XIX, 40: "Lapides clamabunt."

than all others, the stone of this tomb, whence issues the ever-echoing voice[1] of the Prince of the Apostles, the Vicar of Jesus Christ. The golden house of Nero is an inglorious ruin, and who recalls Caesar but to curse him? The tomb of the martyr is more than ever glorious,[2] and the Holy Ghost has prophesied that his memory shall live eternally.[3]

Tradition, confirmed by numerous archeological documents, has preserved for us the portrait of Saint Peter. He was of medium height but well-proportioned. He had a pale complexion, dark eyes, hair thick and crisp, curled beard, features somewhat heavy, which lent to the mobility of his expression something of the Arab race, the grace of a child with the healthy agility of a man of action.[4] Towards the end of his life his forehead was bare and his eyes had lost their brightness, by reason of the tears shed for the denial of his Friend. This soul, so vigorous, was also tender and better suited for faith and love than for action. In one word it reveals itself, and we know not how to add to his reply to the question of Jesus: "Simon, son of John, lovest thou Me? — Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee."

It has often been asked: "Which was most

[1] Hebr., XI, 4: "Defunctus adhuc loquitur."

[2] Isai., XI, 10: "Erit gloriosum sepulchrum ejus."

[3] Psalm, CXI, 7: "In memoria aeterna erit justus."

[4] This portrait, taken from Nicephorus, is authorised by the ancient numismatics, glyptics, and sculptures. — Cf. Fr. Wey, Rome, XI, etc.

loved, Peter or John?" — The reason of this question is found in the opposition that is remarked between the superiority of Peter and the apparent preference shown to the Evangelist. "Peter," says St. Augustin, "receives more, because he loves more intensely, as we may conclude from the triple interrogation of Christ, on the shores of the lake, and also from the final response of the Apostle. However, John is called, in the same place, the disciple whom Jesus loved: this indicates a special selection, an evident preference.[1]

The reply given by the same Doctor merits consideration, subtle though it may appear: "The active life represented by Peter," he says, "testifies to a greater love for God than the contemplative life symbolised by John, because it experiences more of the trials of this present life, and desires more ardently to leave it, in order to go to God. But God loves the contemplative life better, because He prolongs it beyond the period that terminates the active life.[2]

Others say that Peter loved Christ better in the person of His followers, and was on this account more loved by Christ, who confided His Church to him; but John loved Jesus for his own sake, and was in this sense more esteemed by Jesus, who confided His mother to his care. Whence we may infer that John loved Jesus Christ rather with a personal affection, as a man loves his friend, — while Peter loved Him more with the affection

[1] Cf. S. August. *in Joann.*, c. XXI, — cited by S. Thom., I, q. XX, art. IV.

[2] S. August., *in Joann.*, c. XXI.

one bestows upon a Master, or as a subject loves his sovereign.[1]

Others again say that Peter's love was greater, judging by his enthusiasm and fervour, while John was loved more, because of the familiarity with which he was favoured, as much on account of his youth as of his virginal purity. And finally, according to others, Peter was more beloved — speaking absolutely — and John was *accidentally* one degree higher in merit and love. Of such discussions the Angel of the Schools observes: "It is presumptuous to pronounce judgment it these matters, for the Lord is the weigher of spirits."[2]

Therefore, let us leave to God the task of solving this difficulty; but let us not forget that the end of the Incarnation and of the Redemption was to establish the Church, every thought and every affection of Jesus Christ tending from the first to this end. Peter has been chosen for the foundation of the Church and the column of Truth; whence we may conclude that he seemed to the Master the most worthy of representing Him, and of succeeding in the achievment of His plan. So Peter was, it appears, the most esteemed and the most loved, since we cannot admit that in Jesus Christ there was a contradiction which would allow Him to confide His Church to a fellow-worker less imbued with His spirit, or less devoted to His person and His work. Peter is the associate,

[1] V. the note that accompanies the response to the 3. (*Sum. theol.*, loc. citat.).

[2] Prov., XVI, 2: "Spirituum ponderator est Dominus."

par excellence, of Jesus Christ; he is then the friend, *par excellence*, — freely chosen, as a friend should be; — the object, however, of a choice that determines the conditions of the mission to which he is affiliated. He is the impersonation of love, as he is of authority and of glory.

We are able to love more tenderly those whose personal charm responds best to our own nature; we love with greater tenacity and deeper intensity those whom we feel can understand and best serve the ends God has in view for us. The first sweeten our joy at eve, when toil is but a recollection; the second lighten the labours of the day, when work and strife contend for success and honour. John, perhaps, at certain times consoled and gladdened more fully the heart of his divine Friend; Peter possessed the whole soul of the Saviour without intermittance or change, from the moment when he heard, on the banks of the Jordan, the inspiring words: "Thou art Simon, the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas: which is interpreted Peter,[1] the rock upon which I will build My Church.[2]

[1] John, I, 42.
[2] Matth., XVI, 18.

Chapter III.

James the Greater and John the Evangelist.

"Da nobis ut unus ad dexteram tuam et alius ad sinistram tuam sedeamus in gloria tua."

Mark, X, 37.

Peter was not the only of the Apostles who enjoyed the Master's particular esteem; it was also shared by two of his fellow-citizens and friends, — the "elect among the elect," — according to the words of an ancient writer.[1]

James and John are known to us from the Gospel, which also mentions their father Zebedee and their mother Salome.[2] Zebedee was a fisherman of Bethsaida, living in fairly easy circumstances, as would appear from the sacred text, and who had married a niece, or cousin, of the holy Virgin. We should know little more of him than his name, did not tradition tell us that he became one of the disciples and shortly afterwards died in the peace of the Lord; but of Salome we know from the Gospel that she was among the holy women who followed Jesus when He began to preach, that she was on familiar terms with Him, that she was present at His death on the cross, and that she was one of the first to see Him on the

[1] "Ἐκλεκτῶν ἐκλεκτότεροι."

[2] Matth., IV, 21, and Mark, X, 35. — Mark, XV, 40 and XVI, 1.

morning of His resurrection.[1] Tradition, as we have already stated, completes her history, and tells us that Salome was exiled from Palestine and took part in the evangelisation of Provence, where her tomb is still venerated.[2]

Of this marriage two children were born, — James, to whom is given the surname of Greater, to distinguish him from his cousin who is mentioned in the Gospel of Saint Mark[3] — and John, who was to become the most sublime of the inspired writers. Born about the same time as the Saviour,[4] it would seem that they were predestined to a close familiarity with Him from their infancy and during their youth. However, we have no proof of their intimacy, and at first we might be inclined to hold a contrary opinion. They lived on the shores of the lake of Tiberias, from whence their visits to Nazareth, situated in the mountains, must have been few. The two localities were separated not only by a considerable distance — ten leagues as the bird flies, — but it was at least a day's journey[5] from one to the other, and oriental habits did not lend themselves very readily to visiting at such inconvenience. The two families met therefore rarely enough, — on the way to

[1] Matth., XX, 20, and XXVII, 56; — Luke, XXIV, 10, etc.

[2] Vid. sup. Liv. I, c. 3.

[3] Mark, XV, 40: "Jacobi Minoris."

[4] Some commentators suppose Saint John to have been twenty-seven at the time of his first calling.

[5] The accurate calculation of progress in traversing the distance on horseback was seven hours, when the road was not cut up by rain.

Jerusalem in times of prescribed pilgrimages, or in those gatherings convoked by the principal incidents of life. We must not, however, conclude that they were absolutely isolated, in as much as the occupations of Zebedee and those of Joseph enabled them to meet oftener than would at first appear. But notwithstanding, there is nothing that points to familiar intercourse between Jesus and His cousins, before their meeting on the banks of the Jordan at the very beginning of His public life.

James and John were among the most fervent of the Baptist's disciples, as it appears from the Scripture, which intimates their submissive reception of the first indication in evidence of the Messiah.[1] Scarcely had John heard the words: "Behold the Lamb of God," than he hastened to follow Jesus, bringing James with him as Andrew had brought Simon. Under what circumstances had they received the first lessons of the Precursor? It would be difficult to answer this question, but we may suppose that their trade in fish brought them to Jerusalem, by the route that follows the course of the Jordan, and that they had profited by this occasion to receive instruction and baptism at Bethabara. Some commentators think that this also would explain the relations which John had with the house of the Pontiffs, where we know he was well received.[2] Young, vigorous, and active, the sons of Zebedee could not fear these excur-

[1] John, I, 26–41.

[2] John, XVIII, 15: "Notus erat pontifici, etc."

sions, to which they were drawn as much by the love of adventure as by that taste for traffic which so characterised the young Israelite.[1] The Galileans passed for adventurers, and nothing was more common than to find, on the way to the Holy City, young men listening with attention to the rumours that agitated the country, associated perhaps with some party of zealots, enthusiasts in the hopes raised by the words of the Precursor, and profiting by their profession to pass unnoticed everywhere. Of solid faith and pure morals, their ardour was tempered by all that integrity and simplicity could infuse into the transports of such souls — devoted entirely to sacrifice and obedience. They were constrained to detest the Romans, to scorn Herod, to mourn over the abasement of the priesthood, to cry out for the coming of the Messiah — in the silence and reserve imposed by obedience to their father, and respect due to the successors of the Machabees.

Thus they were disposed to respond to the call of Jesus, by their age, their temperament, their habits, and their aspirations. Their relationship with Him could not but give a new impetus to the hopes He represented. Without at first recognising Him to be the Son of God made man, they were willingly persuaded that He was the future King, whose reign the whole world announced. Doubtless they were ready to believe in the approaching resurrection of Israel and the uni-

[1] V. the Comment on S. Luke, XV, 12. (Parable of the Prodigal Son.)

versal extension of its power: but they longed to take a leading part in this glory and prosperity, for which their happy destiny enabled them to labour from the very first day, under the guidance of one of their own family. This dream should not discredit them in our eyes; it was shared by their companions until almost the last moment, and Peter himself did not awake from it completely before the Transfiguration on Thabor. Moreover, it subtracted nothing from their devotion and their abnegation, as we shall soon have occasion to prove. No sooner had they attached themselves to the person of Jesus, than they returned with Him to Galilee, where the marriage feast was being prepared which was celebrated by the miracle that consecrated the beginning of the Saviour's public life.[1]

Everyone remembers that wonderful scene, and we recall it merely to point out the belief that John was the bridegroom of this marriage. There is nothing improbable in this legend, as is the case with so many others of the beginning of Christianity, since we find it supported by the highest authorities. Saint Jerome[2] affirms that John was called by the Lord just when he was about to be married. Saint Augustine[3] says that the Lord, in calling him, saved him from the troubled waters

[1] John, II, 1 and following.

[2] S. Hieron. (Prolog. in Joann.): "Joannem nubere volentem a nuptiis per Dominum fuisse vocatum."

[3] S. Augustin (Praef. in Joann.): "Joannem Dominus de fluctivaga nuptiarum tempestate vocavit."

of married life. Saint Thomas of Aquin,[1] adopting the opinion of his two predecessors, also says that Christ changed John's resolve to marry. To these great names it remains but to add those of the Venerable Bede, of Rupert, of Ludolf the Carthusian, to whom Dominic Soto O. P., one of the greatest of modern theologians, unhesitatingly subscribes. It is, besides, a tradition of the Mussulmans, who faithfully preserve all primitive beliefs that do not offend their prejudices.

It is useless to object, with Cornelius a Lapide,[2] that the Evangelist has always been considered a virgin, since his intention of entering into matrimony is no argument against his perseverance in virginity. Although he conformed to the ideas of his people and his period, in accepting the law of marriage, or even in conceiving it spontaneously, it does not follow that he ceased to be a virgin, since the call of the Lord preceded the realisation of his design. Neither does it follow that he held virginity in less esteem than marriage, and it is perhaps by reason of his love of virginity that his vocation saved him from the troubled waters of married life. The testimonies of the Fathers cited by Cornelius a Lapide after Baronius,[3] do not contradict tradition in any way, and we confess we do not see why so much trouble should be taken to

[1] S. Thom., 2—2, q. CLXXXVI, art. IV, ad 1: "Joannem tamen volentem nubere a nuptiis revocavit."

[2] *Comment. in Joann.*, loc. cit.

[3] Baron., Annal., ad ann. 31. — He believed that the bridegroom was Simon the Zealot, on account of his surname of Cananean.

destroy one of the most charming pages of primitive history.[1]

In the opinion of those who believe in the espousals of John, the bride of Cana would be Susanna, whose name is merely mentioned in the Gospel,[2] and whose personality is veiled from our sight as are oriental maidens on their wedding day. The heavenly Spouse would reserve to Himself the raising of this veil till the day when He shall disclose, in the beauty of chosen souls, the reflex of His own ineffable purity. Meanwhile He has reserved for Himself the perfume of the lily, gathered by His own divine hand in the gardens where He loves to enjoy the freshness of innocence and peace.[3] In any case, John bound himself more closely to Jesus after the call which followed the first miraculous draught of fish. James followed his example, and both left their father and their nets, to go forth in quest of souls.

From this moment the two brothers, enlightened by a marvellous revelation, rivalled each other in affection for their divine Master, who repaid them with a predilection which they shared equally. Until the Last Supper nothing seems to indicate a difference between them — either on their part or on the part of Jesus. Similar in character and deportment, to such an extent that one might

[1] No one in the Church refuses the glory of virginity to Saint Henry, Saint Kinegunde, or the Blessed Lucy of Narni, although they had been married.

[2] Luke, VIII, 3.

[3] Cant., II, 16: "Who feedeth among the lilies, till the day break, and the shadows retire."

believe them to be twins, they showed the same impetuous ardour in the pursuit of the kingdom of God, and their zeal, which led them even to excess, gained for them eventually the surname of *Sons of Thunder*.[1] Was it owing merely to their natural impetuosity, or had the Master wished gently to discountenance their appeal for vengeance,[2] when they would consume the recalcitrant inhabitants of En-Gannim. — "You know not of what spirit you are," He had said to them: "The Son of man came not to destroy souls, but to save." And He had brought them away with Him to another town less averse to the laws of hospitality.

This ardour did not, however, displease Him, and He associated them with Peter in all His more important works. They accompanied Him to the house of Jairus,[3] when He raised the daughter of the Prince of the Synagogue to life; then again to Thabor, when He appeared transfigured between Moses and Elias.[4] Peter is always the first in these various circumstances, and he alone speaks when occasion presents itself. Once only does John put himself forward and make himself the interpreter of their unanimous feeling. It was when they suspected a neophyte whom they met by chance casting out devils in the name of Jesus. — "Master,"

[1] Mark, III, 17: "And He named them Boanerges which is the sons of thunder."

[2] Luke, IX, 54. — *En-Gannim* would be the present Djenîn, celebrated for the fanaticism of its inhabitants.

[3] Mark, V, 37.

[4] Matth., XVII, 1.

said John, "we saw one casting out devils in Thy name, who followeth not us, and we forbade him. — But Jesus said, Do not forbid him; for there is no man that doeth a miracle in My name that can soon speak ill of Me. For he that is not against you, is for you."[1]

James appears to have been still more reserved and silent. Once, however, both of them had occasion to speak, and their words are among the most beautiful in the Gospel. The days of the betrayal and the Passion were approaching: the Twelve went up to Jerusalem, sad and troubled, listening to Jesus, who spoke to them of the snares laid for Him by the priests and Pharisees — of the trials that were in store for Him, and of His suffering and resurrection. James and John were then, it appears, at a little distance with their mother, who perhaps like themselves had heard only the last words of the Master. Profiting by the silence that ensued, Salome approached, and bending low before Jesus, implied that she wished to speak to Him, alone. "What wilt thou? He asked her. — She answered: "Say that these my two sons may sit, the one on Thy right hand, and the other on Thy left, in Thy kingdom."[2] Jesus readily perceived the inspiration that had prompted this demand, and made a sign for the two brothers to approach. Simultaneously, believing that their joint entreaty might prevail, both exclaimed together: "Master, we desire that whatsoever we

[1] Mark, IX, 38 and following.
[2] Matth., XX, 20–21.

shall ask, Thou wouldst do it for us." Their tone was full of loving confidence, and Jesus appeared touched by it. With a smile, He said: "What would you that I should do for you?" And they replied: "Grant to us that we may sit, one on Thy right hand, and the other on Thy left hand, in Thy glory."[1] It was neither vanity nor ambition that urged them to claim such distinction, but the great love they bore the Son of God. Salome was, no doubt, more influenced by a desire for their personal interest, and her own:[2] they hoped only to bring back the thoughts of their divine Friend to more pleasing prospects. What signified the struggle, since it must end in victory? Why fear a death which should but give new life? Like the other Apostles, like Peter himself, they did not understand clearly, nor did they wish to understand too much;[3] with this difference, however, that they persistently believed in a final triumph, of which their companions merely entertained the idea. It was repugnant to them to see the Master defeated, their hopes shattered with His, the joy of His kingdom vanished for Him as well as for them, even more for Him than for them. Their demand is full of tenderness, but still more of courage. "You know not what you ask," Jesus gravely replied. "Can you drink of the chalice that I drink of; or be baptised with the baptism

[1] Mark, X, 35–37.

[2] Commentators generally attribute to her a character which justifies this opinion.

[3] Cf. Matth., XVI, 23; — Mark, VIII, 33 and following.

wherewith I am baptised? — We can," they said to Him.

Never has more magnificent testimony been rendered to friendship. James and John were not mistaken as to the meaning of His question; they fully understood all the renunciation and sacrifice it implied. It entailed a share of hatred, contempt, treason, suffering, abandonment and death; since all combined constitute the bitter chalice and the freezing baptism. Self must be abandoned, with closed eyes, to the impulse of devotion and belief that it will lead to the resurrection after death. Mystery, which the mind has never conceived! Abyss, whence none have ever risen! And they found, both of them, with the same breath the same reply: "Master, we can." And Jesus said: "You shall indeed drink of the chalice that I drink of; and with the baptism wherewith I am baptised, you shall be baptised; but to sit on My right hand or on My left, is not mine to give to you, but to them for whom it is prepared."[1] Then He went forward a little, leaving the two brothers behind, and the Ten surrounded them with indignation,[2] because they supposed their demand to be the outcome of ambition and pride. To cut short the discussion, Jesus called them and said: "You know that they who seem to rule over the Gentiles, lord it over them; and their princes have power over them. But it is not so among you: but whosoever will be greater, shall be your

[1] Matth., XX, 23; — Mark, X, 39–40.
[2] Matth., XX, 24; — Mark, X, 41.

minister. And whosoever will be first among you, shall be the servant of all. For the Son of man also is not come to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a redemption for many."[1]

Shortly afterwards, James and John were to be associated in the agony of the Master, in this Garden of Olives where they had so often rested with Him, and in which treason was about to surprise them. Both, like Peter, forgot their promise for the moment, and fell asleep while Jesus prayed and wept, and all three fled at the approach of the murderers. John, at least, soon recovered from his terror, and returned to seek Jesus, whom he accompanied henceforward even to the summit of Calvary. If Peter and James did not deem it necessary to stand by the divine Martyr, John could not ignore the duty imposed on him by the ineffable predilection of which he was the object at the Last Supper.

The title of "beloved disciple"[2] appears for the first time in the narrative of the events of Holy Thursday. While the Apostles, stirred by the allusion to the traitor, look for him among themselves, John leans upon the Master's bosom and seems to seek refuge there from the agitation and sadness of the passing hour.[3] Peter then touches him upon the shoulder, saying in a whisper: "Who is it of whom He speaketh?" — And John asks

[1] Matth., *ibid.*, 23; — Mark, *ibid.*, 42.

[2] John, XIII, 23: "Quem diligebat Jesus."

[3] John, XIII, 23: "Erat ergo recumbens .... in sinu Jesu."

simply: "Lord, who is it?" Is it possible to find anything more touching than this almost childlike confidence, in a soul so impetuous and, at a moment, so gentle? He must indeed feel that he is the well-beloved, and have fully proved his fidelity, to speak thus; the Master's reply enlightens us. Speaking in a low voice, He said: "He it is to whom I shall reach bread dipped."[1] No one had heard; no one but John understood why Jesus had added, in presenting the fatal morsel to Judas: "That which thou doest, do quickly!" — The traitor went at once, without a word, and the incident had no special import except for the beloved disciple. Peter, distracted no doubt by other cares, does not appear to have troubled himself further. But John's eyes and thoughts sadly followed the traitor whom he had suspected since the days of Christ's preaching on the shores of Lake Tiberias.[2]

After the first emotion, friendship claimed its privilege, and the apostle was strained, so to speak, against the Master's heart. When he had followed Him to the house of the High Priest, and been present at His condemnation, he had sought out Mary, to whom his care was so necessary on this occasion: thus he accomplished the heartfelt desire of Jesus, as it were foreseeing the mission that was to be given him on Calvary. With Mary and the holy women, he had met his Friend on His way to be crucified, had climbed behind Him the hill of Golgotha, and had taken his place at the foot of

[1] John, XIII, 26–29.

[2] Id., VI, 71–72: "Hic enim erat traditurus eum."

the cross, there to console Him by his presence and his love. Thus had he actually taken his share of the chalice and the promised baptism; he was himself nailed to the cross, and felt himself immolated with the Redeemer for the salvation of souls.

There yet remained one last proof of his resemblance to Jesus. Death was about to achieve its momentary triumph; it was evident by the painful respiration and the increasing weakness of the Crucified. A long silence had followed the promise made to the good thief; a silence rendered still more dismal by the darkness whose mysterious gloom froze the souls of the few remaining friends at the foot of the gibbet. Suddenly the dying voice was heard, speaking with ineffable tenderness and respect. Addressing Himself to Mary, Jesus said: "Woman, behold thy son," and His eyes, dimmed with blood and tears, rested on the apostle. Then, completing His intention, He said: "Behold thy mother,"[1] as if speaking to a younger brother, henceforth commanded to supply His place in the performance of all filial duties. "O truly happy disciple," exclaims Bossuet, "to whom Jesus Christ has given His cross as the companion of His suffering life; to whom Jesus Christ has given His mother, to live eternally in His remembrance; to whom Jesus Christ has given His heart, to be for ever one with Himself."[2]

Yes indeed, truly happy disciple, even in the

[1] John, XIX, 26-27.

[2] Bossuet, *Panégyrique de Saint Jean.*

bitter sadness of these two days, since in them he obtained more than Salome had asked for him. But happier still, since he proved himself worthy of the friendship that had offered him a share in its chalice and its cross! "Certainly, Christians," continues Bossuet, "when Jesus Christ enters anywhere, He enters with His cross, He carries with Him all His thorns, and shares them with those He loves; as our apostle is His beloved, He presents him with His cross; and with this same hand which He has so often laid upon the head of John, leaning upon His sacred bosom, with an incredible tenderness, He presents His bitter chalice, full of suffering and affliction, which He orders him to drink, and to drain it even to the dregs: "Calicem quidem meum bibetis."[1]

He drank this chalice in all its bitterness, in sustaining in her weakness the divine mother, now become his own — in accompanying her to the tomb on the evening of this sorrowful day — in bringing her back to his house at Sion[2] — in bearing her company all next day — in watching over her repose during the two nights so full of terror and anguish, that passed between Good Friday and the day of Resurrection. He had taken the heart of Jesus, to love Mary, to suffer with her, and to complete with her all that was wanting — to borrow the expression of Saint Paul — in the

[1] Bossuet, *loc. cit.*

[2] John, XIX, 27: "Accepit eam discipulus in sua." The Greek text says, "Εις τὰ ἴδια," which is the literal meaning.

Passion of Jesus Christ.[1] If the Master had shown His confidence in John by the gift of His mother, the disciple had inspired this confidence at the very time, according to Bossuet, in offering himself to receive this sorrowful trust. "Ego dilecto meo," he said: "Master, I am yours; use me as it shall please you."[2] The heart of Jesus, and that of John were henceforth but one and the same heart, but one and the same soul, according to the old definition of friendship: *cor unum et anima una*.

After those hours of sadness came an hour of joy, that in which Magdalen said to Peter and John: "They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid Him."[3] Understanding the happy mystery at once, the two Apostles ran towards the garden. John, being the younger, ran the quicker, and arrived first at the entrance of the sepulchre; he did not enter, however, but waited for Peter, who went in before the beloved disciple.[4]

The Gospel narrative now opens a new field for us. Henceforth Peter and John shall appear always united by a particular affection, tinged with a shade of respect on the part of the latter. The preferences of the Master might have created jealousy and rivalry; but, on the contrary, they produced a more intimate union between the two

[1] Coloss., I, 24: "Adimpleo ea quae desunt passionum Christi."

[2] Bossuet, *ibid.*

[3] John, XX, 2.

[4] John, XX, 5–6.

Apostles placed above their companions, as if the greater share of the divine affection bestowed on them, had united their hearts more closely.

We have the testimony of centuries: Peter tenderly loved[1] the Evangelist, and in the fact of the latter at the door of the sepulchre, we discover even more affection than respect. Again, in the Acts of the Apostles, we find them together going up to the Temple, on the day of the healing of the paralytic. Peter said to the poor man, "Look upon *us*,"[2] but nevertheless it is he alone who orders him to walk in the name of Jesus Christ, no doubt because John had modestly withdrawn. Even when the crowd surrounds them with marks of approbation, it is Peter who gives the first account of the miracle, and John does not intervene till afterwards, to complete the edification of their listeners.[3] Both arraigned before the Sanhedrin, they preserved the same attitude; the constancy of both struck the judges,[4] whom the words of Peter had already shaken. But on being denied a hearing, both together[5] protested against the silence imposed upon them, saying; "We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard."

[1] "Σφόδρα ἐφίλει" says S. John Chrysostom (Homil. LXXXVII in Joann.). — Cf. S. Augustin, In Joannem tract. CXXIV.

[2] Act. Apost., III, 4: "Respice in nos!"

[3] Act. Apost., IV, 1: "Loquentibus autem *illis* ad populum."

[4] Id., IV, 13: "Videntes autem Petri constantiam et Joannis," etc.

[5] Id., IV, 19: "*Petrus vero et Joannes respondentes* dixerunt," etc.

As the result of this friendship, John must have become more intimately connected with the Prince of the Apostles in his ministry. Such is at least the impression produced by the fact that the Twelve sent them together to Samaria, to confirm the neophytes of the deacon Philip.[1] It was evident to all that Peter particularly favoured this companion, in whom he probably found a sympathetic and efficient coadjutor. We must not suppose, however, that he conferred greater powers on John than were already bestowed upon the other Apostles, by right of their divine mission; we do not see that this delegation can have any special significance. In the foundation and organisation of the churches of the Asiatic Heptarchy, John exercised the same prerogatives as Paul, Andrew, or Bartholomew. His influence is more evident and more vigorous, without differing from theirs.

When Paul came to Jerusalem, three years after the journey to Samaria, John was absent, as were the greater number of his colleagues, and the Doctor of the nations found only Peter and James the Less.[2] But on the occasion of the council at Jerusalem, Paul having come to defend the interests of the Christians of Antioch, had the pleasure of meeting John again, of whom he said that he was, with Peter and James the Less, one of the pillars of the Church; and John graciously gave his hand to him and to Barnabas, his companion in the Apostolate.[3] By the same Epistle we dis-

[1] Act. Apost., VIII, 14–15.
[2] Galat., I, 18–19.
[3] Id., II, 9.

cover that John had, up to this time, preached only to the Jews, but he was shortly to be the bearer of the divine message to the Gentiles.

After the crisis of the year 42, Peter, miraculously delivered from prison, left Jerusalem and went towards the north, preaching on his way to the populations of Asia-Minor,[1] as far as the shores of the Black Sea. He was accompanied by many holy women,[2] and the tradition that the Blessed Virgin was at this time at Ephesus warrants our belief that she presided over this union of Sisters, as they were called. We know by the same tradition that John did not leave Mary on her departure from Jerusalem, and consequently we must assign to this date the first coming of the Apostle to Ephesus, where, however, he does not appear to have preached on this occasion. When he had confided the divine Mother to the care of the faithful, he had probably set out again on his course of evangelical missions.[3] The glory of founding the Church at Ephesus was reserved for Paul, who came in the year 55 to take up and complete the attempt of Apollo. Tradition fixes the ordinary abode of Saint John at Hierapolis, a town of greater Phrygia, where he lived until the arrival of Saint

[1] Eusebius, Hist. eccl., book III, c. 1.

[2] Cor., IX, 5. — Clement of Alexandria (Stromat., VII, II), places the wife of Peter among the number of these pious women, and represents her as dying a martyr in the presence of her husband. We are totally unable, in any way, to reconcile this assertion with the silence of the Gospel and the actual facts.

[3] Cf. S. Iren., Haeres., II, 22; — Polycrat. and Apollon (after Euseb., *Hist. eccl.*, V, 18 and 24).

Philip. There he was more in the centre of his jurisdiction, which extended to the country of the Parthians and the eastern shore of the Black Sea.[1]

The council of Jerusalem recalled him to the Holy City, with Mary, whose death took place at the very time when the Apostles had assembled for their last meeting at the foot of Calvary. After having laid the mortal remains of the Virgin Mary in her tomb, and having been present at her Assumption into Heaven, John left this land for ever, whence all whom he loved had departed. Even his brother, James the Greater, no longer slept in the tomb where the disciples had hidden his martyred remains; Spain had claimed the relics of her first Apostle, and henceforth, in order to venerate them it would be necessary to cross the sea and plunge into the mountains of Galicia,[2] almost to the extremity of the West.

After the death of Stephen, James had gone to Gaul, and penetrated by the north into the Iberian Peninsula, preaching only to the proselytes who had been converted in these regions after the Dispersion. It would appear that his ministry was productive of but little fruit, and we find him returning to Jerusalem at the time when the first Agrippa began to persecute the Christians, in the hope of obtaining the favours of the Jews. Amongst the number of those who were arrested was James

[1] The first Epistle of Saint John originally bore the title: "To the Parthians."

[2] Even as far as *Iria Flavia*, distant 10 kilometres from Compostella, whither the relics of Saint James were transported, in the ninth century.

the Greater, a victim to the rancour of the Priests and Scribes, on account of his zeal in preaching the Gospel. Not daring openly to take the initiative by violence, they suborned against him two men, whom it is necessary to mention specially, because their part in this matter characterises exactly the epoch at which we have now arrived.

When Peter and John had confirmed the first Christians of Antioch, they had, as we have seen above, encountered Simon the Magician, whose hatred had been excited by their denunciations. Forced to beat a retreat before them, the heresiarch had gone about the neighbourhood disseminating his doctrines and making disciples as ardent as himself in the diffusion of error. At Jerusalem, the sect was represented by Hermogenes and Philetas, who were naturally disposed to combat the brother of the Evangelist. The Jews made a compact with them, and they entered into a contest with James, who before long confounded and converted them. Their perseverance remains doubtful;[1] but the efforts of the Jews were none the less baffled, and they resolved to come to open violence. Feeling assured of the neutrality of the Roman garrison, they provoked a disturbance, similar to that in which Saint Stephen had perished. A Scribe, of the name of Josias, gave information against the Apostle, who was dragged before

[1] Such we gather from the second Epistle to Timothy (I, 20), in which some recognise in these two men the opponents of whom Saint Paul speaks. — Cf. Baronius, *Annal.*, ad ann. 44.

Agrippa and forthwith condemned to be beheaded.[1] The order was executed without delay. As he was going to execution a paralytic approached him and was cured in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Seeing this, Josias repented, and casting himself at the feet of the martyr, he supplicated his pardon and begged to be received into the number of the disciples of Him whom he preached. "I believe," he said with firmness, "that Jesus Christ is the Son of the living God, and I wish to die professing this believe." The incensed crowd immediately bound him to the Apostle, and the King did not insist on issuing a decree for their simultaneous death. When they had arrived at the place of execution, James called for water, which was brought without difficulty, and Josias received baptism. Then James made the Sign of the Cross on his forehead, on which he imprinted the kiss of peace. An instant later, their two heads fell under the sword.[2] The Christians took the body of the apostle and buried it in a place unknown to us, perhaps in the sepulchre where James the Less was laid at a later date, on the banks of the brook of Cedron. Their relationship authorises this supposition, which is but vaguely confirmed by tradition.

An idea occurs to the mind of the pilgrim who visits on Mount Sion the places consecrated by the

[1] The 25. March of the year 42, according to some: the 1. April, according to the Roman Breviary.

[2] Euseb., Hist. eccl., book II, c. 8 (according to Clement of Alexandria, *Hypotyposes*. — Cf. Hist. de la Passion des Apôtres, which Baronius accepts with reserve.

memory of the son of Zebedee. The spot where his blood was shed[1] is at an equal distance between the palace of the Herods and that of the High Priest, consequently in the city, and the execution must have taken place, contrary to custom, within the walls. It appears natural to conclude that his death was the result of a tumult precipitated by the conversion of Josias, or that they must have wished to render the tragedy more impressive in the vicinity of the dwellings of the principal disciples of Christ — that even of His mother, who dwelt beside the other Mary, the mother of John Mark, in whose house the Christians were wont to assemble. There is nothing in this supposition contrary to the inclinations of the authors of the crime; Agrippa and the son of Annas did not recoil from these refinements of cruelty, which must have gratified the desires of the people.

John had therefore nothing further to detain him in Jerusalem; far otherwise, the sight of these empty tombs deluged in blood must have rent his heart, and it was without regret that he set out on the road to exile, or rather on the way of the Apostolate. He visited Laodicea on his travels; then Ephesus, Smyrna, Thyatira, Pergamus, Sardinia, and Philadelphia, whence he regained greater Phrygia[2] and his church at Hierapolis. After the

[1] It is commemorated by a little chapel of the great Armenian church. According to tradition, the house to which the Blessed Virgin was brought by Saint John, was quite near.

[2] Which must not be confounded with the Phrygia *ad Hellespontum* or *Minor*, situated further north, and separated from greater Phrygia by Mysia.

death of Paul he came to settle at Ephesus, to continue the work of the great apostle and to assist Timothy[1] in his contest against the Jews, the pagans, and the heretics. He left behind him, as bishop of Hierapolis, his beloved disciple Papias, who had become celebrated by his "Treatise on the Words of the Lord."[2] Feeling at ease in this respect, he gave himself up altogether to the organisation of the churches of Asia-Minor,[3] without, however, relaxing the supervision so necessary in Ephesus at this time.

The city of Diana had long been famous for its love of the marvellous and the practice of magic. It had become the centre of resort for augurs and soothsayers whose doctrines and celebrity exercised a deplorable influence over the minds of even the most cultivated. Their reputation had extended across the sea and penetrated even into the palace of the Caesars, "The gloomy Tiberius took lessons from them in magic, and Nero encouraged so many of these magicians to come from Asia, that they became a veritable plague over the whole country. Their influence was felt in every life. Men, foresaken by the gods, had no other resource in the isolation in which they found themselves, than to consult these imposters and to become initiated by them in the worship of the in-

[1] Whom Saint Paul had made Bishop of Ephesus.

[2] "Λογίων κυριακῶν ἐξηγήσει." — An inscription found in a manuscript of the Vatican says of Papias: "Discipulus Johannis carus."

[3] Clem. Alex. ap. Euseb., *Hist. eccl.*, III, 24.

fernal Pan."[1] The Apostles had encountered them more than once in their course: Peter had contested against Simon at Rome; Paul against Elymas in the island of Cyprus.[2] But at Ephesus the struggle was to become yet more bitter and more determined.

The first phase of the contest coincides with the sojourn of Paul at Ephesus from 55 to 57. A singular personage, whose life appears to be as much fable as history — Apollonius of Tyana, came to settle there under pretext of teaching the philosophy of Pythagoras, and had at once acquired a considerable ascendancy. Like Simon of Samaria, the new wonder-worker willingly allowed himself to be treated as a supernatural being, even before the prevailing antichristian spirit had sought to oppose him to Jesus Christ. His doctrine to a great extent resembled that of Simon, with the addition of his own inventions. His prestige perplexed those whom his teachings had not seduced, and he also passed in popular belief for the Power of God. However, at this time, he does not appear to have occupied the place in public esteem to which he afterwards attained, and his name is not mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles. Saint Paul was fairly successful with the magicians and augurs; several were converted by him, and their conversion was followed by that immense *auto-da-fé* of formularies and theurgical treatises which Saint Luke has recorded.[3] The flames had not

[1] Sepp., Vie de N.-S. J.-C. sect., VII, c. 33.

[2] Act. Apost , XIII, 8 and following.

[3] Act. Apost., XIX, 18.

only devoured books of magic, but even images of the great Diana of Ephesus, whose cult Paul had considerably discredited. A sedition provoked by the silversmiths, led by Demetrius, nearly cost the Apostle his life, and he was forced to yield to the storm and retire into Macedonia.[1] He was never again to see Ephesus, the Ancients of which city greeted him for the last time a year later at the port of Miletus,[2] on the journey which he undertook to Jerusalem, and which closes his labours in the East.

When John came in his turn to confront Artemis and Mithras, he found Apollonius of Tyana more powerful than ever, upheld by the favour of Vespasian and strongly supported by the pagans, the Jews, and the agnostics. The number of the Evangelist's enemies seemed but to augment his courage, and never did he prove himself more worthy to be called the *Son of Thunder*, for with veritable thunder-peals did he signalise the various stages of his campaign against the magician. To wonders he opposed miracles, to sophisms the brilliancy of his eloquence,[3] and it was not long before victory remained with him.

Was it to avenge these triumphs that the adversaries of the Apostle stirred up the representatives of Roman authority against him? It is not easy to say. All that we know is that he was sent to Rome to appear before Caesar, that is, before the

[1] Id., XIX, 23–40; XX, 1.

[2] Id., XX, 17 and following.

[3] Cf. Baronius, *Annal.*, ad ann. 98, cit. Euseb. and Sozomen.

crowned monster who had succeeded Titus, under the name of Domitian. After having confessed Jesus Christ, John was taken to the Latin Gate and there plunged into a cauldron of boiling oil, whence he emerged sound and safe. The Love which had ordained this trial for him preserved him for others still more painful, were these only the prolonged delay of reunion with his divine Friend.[1] Domitian, probably not wishing to expose himself to a fresh affront, banished the Apostle to the Island of Patmos, one of those arid rocks burnt up by the sun of the Sporades.[2] There the exile was to learn by revelation the future sufferings of the Church, and also the triumph she would gain after the supreme crisis in which all seemed lost. The book of these visions is known to the whole world by the name of the Apocalypse, and still remains to all as mysterious as at the first day. We learn only that Hell will never lay down its arms, and that with a persistently foolish confidence it will pursue its attacks against the Spouse of Jesus Christ, who shall be protected by unfailing wisdom and power until the day of the last judgment. The faithful, therefore, must not sleep in the false assurance of an impossible peace; neither must they be discouraged when evil triumphs, nor seek refuge in a purely human protection. God watches — God preserves — God brings victory when He pleases; but God alone, who has no equal, to

[1] V. Bossuet, *Panégyrique de Saint Jean*, 1. partie.

[2] Tertull., *De praescript.*, 36; — S. Hieron., *Contra Jovinian.* I, 26; — *Martyrol. Rom.*, ad 6 Maii; — Apoc. I, 9.

whom alone is due glory and praise for ever and ever.[1]

While writing the Apocalypse under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, John did not forget the Christians of Asia-Minor, whom he might call his children; especially the seven churches so justly celebrated in antiquity, which he could look upon as his first-born. He sent to their Angels, that is to their Bishops, advice and counsel full of gentleness and power, to sustain and reanimate their zeal. Heresy had begun its work of demoralisation among the faithful of these churches: Cerinthus had joined hands with the supporters of Apollonius, and the divinity of Jesus Christ was called in question, even by preachers who called themselves Christians. The contemplation of these evils saddened the beloved disciple far more than exile and persecution, and he ardently longed for freedom in order to grapple with them. The death of Domitian at last permitted him to regain Ephesus and to live there in peace, during the reign of Nerva and shortly after of Trajan, who was disposed like his predecessor not to interfere with the Christians.

Apollonius, compromised by his intrigues against Domitian, had been persecuted by this latter; then, on the accession of Nerva he seems to have been reinstated in favour; but this favour did not last long, and John soon became master of the

[1] V. on the Apocalypse, the *prologues* of several commentators on Saint John. — Quite recently Père Gallois O. P. has written an essay on its interpretation, which merits the attention of readers. (Paris, P. Lethielleux.)

situation by the disappearance of the sophist, whose death, in 97, was as enigmatical as his life. With him magic seemed to vanish, ceding its place to gnosticism, far more formidable and tenacious, the source of all heresies in the opinion of the Fathers of the Church — the synthesis of all errors, may we not say, who see it now reappearing and flourishing under the patronage of secret societies?

This is not the place for a disquisition on the doctrines of gnosticism: suffice it to say that the divinity of Jesus Christ was assailed, with varieties of contradictions according to the particular whims of individuals, but all resting on one common negation. Valentinus, Cerinthus, Ebion, were the special representatives of these errors, which spread rapidly on account of the concurrence of the Jews. Justly afraid, the bishops of Asia came to the Apostle and begged him to write a fourth Gospel, for which his personal recollections should furnish the material.[1] John commanded them to pray and fast with him for three days, to obtain light from the Holy Ghost, after which, fully assured of divine assistance, he wrote the Gospel which is, after eighteen centuries, the admiration of pious minds and the despair of the enemies of the Church. It is indeed the Gospel of the divinity of Jesus Christ — of the Word, the eternal Son of God manifested in time — the confutation of the

[1] Cf. Muratori (a fragment of), the second century; — Clem. Alex. after Euseb., *Hist. Eccl.*, VI, 14; — S. Victorin., Petav. (Migne, *Patrol. Graeca*, t. V, col. 333; — S. Hieron., *Provem. in Matth.*

doctrines of Cerinthus, as John himself tells us at the end of his book. But it is also the Gospel of the humanity of the Word made Flesh[1] in reality, living, suffering, and dying as actually mere human life and human flesh, in contradiction to the errors of the Docetae.[2] John affirms it at the end of his Gospel and in the first of his Epistles, appealing to the testimony of his eyes, his ears, and his hands.[3] At the same time, according to the opinion of several Fathers of the Church, it is the necessary complement of the three other Gospels — a spiritual Gospel, as Clement of Alexandria says — completing those exterior biographies which regard our Lord altogether from His outward personality. It is the Gospel of the heart, whether we consider it as revealing the Master's heart to us, or as merely manifesting the intense love of the chosen disciple for his divine Friend. Origen very beautifully says that "the Gospel of St. John is the flower of the Gospels. He alone could penetrate those depths, whose head had rested upon the bosom of Jesus, and to whom Jesus gave His mother. This friend so intimate with Jesus and Mary, this disciple treated by the Master like His other Self, was alone capable of the thoughts and feelings expressed in this book."[4] It

[1] John, XX, 30–31: "These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name."

[2] Sects thus named from the appearance (*δοκέσις*) which they accorded only to the humanity of the Redeemer.

[3] John, XXI, 24; — Id., I Ep. I, 1.

[4] Cf. Fillion, Préface à l'Évangile de S. Jean, § V.

is also, in the same way, the Gospel of the Theologian, as the Greeks still call him.[1] "What mountain," exclaims St. Augustine, "what height can bear comparison with that to which this genius ascends! John soars beyond the summits of earth, ethereal space, starry regions, even the celestial choirs and the angelical legions! How can you speak to him of heaven, of earth and of all that they enclose? Of the spiritual world and the beings that constitute it? These are creatures, the work of God, not God Himself!"[2]

We could add nothing to these praises which are echoed even by the pagans since they have known the work of Saint John,[3] — "an unique and perfect work," Luther is compelled to exclaim; — "a writing so wonderfully accomplished,"[4] adds a modern rationalist; — "the very heart of Christ," to conclude with Ernesti, who has formed the only word worthy of the work, the writer, and the Inspirer. England has rendered a fitting homage to the "Golden Gospel,"[5] by printing it in letters of gold, after the manner of the middle ages.

After this supreme testimony of love, the life of John ended in charity and peace. The weight of years upon his head left his heart still untouched; on the contrary they seemed to make him more

[1] Ἅγιος θεολόγος.

[2] S. Augustin., in Joann., tract. I.

[3] Saint Augustine says that a Platonist wished to have the first verses of this Gospel written, in every school, in letters of gold.

[4] Ewald, *Die Johannische Schriften.*

[5] *The Golden Gospel*, London, 1885, 1 vol. 4°.

tender and more full of spirit. The Fathers tell us of a young man, who had been confided by him to the care of one of the neighbouring bishops, but who had fallen into evil ways through the negligence of his director, pursued far among the mountains, where he concealed this guilt of his lawless life, and brought back to repentance by the tears of the gentle apostle, Everyone remembers his playing with his partridge, and replying to the scoffs of a passer: "Even as the bow of the hunter, the spirit of man may not be always bent." But the standpoint from which we like best to regard him is that of the noble old man carried upon the shoulders of his deacons and greeting the faithful with the words: "My little children, love one another! It is the commandment of the Lord, and if you keep it, that will be sufficient."[1]

In the opinion of some, John should not have died before the coming of the sovereign Judge, but this is an erroneous interpretation of the words of Jesus Christ to Saint Peter on the shores of Lake Tiberias. "For Jesus did not say," according to Saint John himself, "He dieth not; but, So I will have him to remain till I come, what is it to thee?"[2] Death came to him, in fact, in the first years of the second century. He slept in the Lord, amidst the tears and prayers of his disciples, who buried him close to the city,[3] in a tomb over

[1] S. Hieron., *In Galat.*, VI, 10.

[2] John, XXI, 23.

[3] On the site at present occupied by the village of Ayasoulouk (a corruption of Ἅγιος θεολόγος, the name by which the apostle, Saint John, is known in the East.)

which an oratory was soon raised. Piety watched in silence over the remains of the beloved disciple, until the day when triumphant Christianity spanned the walls and cast into mid-air the cupolas of the Great Church of Ephesus. In this venerable basilica in the year 431, the third Ecumenical Council was held, for the condemnation of Nestorius, who denied the divine maternity of Mary. An earthquake reduced it to ruins, but Justinian rebuilt it with such magnificence that it rivalled Saint Sophia in Constantinople. For this reconstruction the Byzantine architects utilised the wreck of the Temple of Diana, especially the beautiful columns of Egyptian granite, two grey and two red, which still rear their magnificent shafts in the Mosque of Selim, substituted for the church of Justinian.[1]

A humble chapel, served by a wretched pope, as little enlightened as the sheep of his flock, has replaced the splendid basilica, but the memory of the apostle has survived, and every year numerous pilgrims set out for Ephesus. God has given us the privilege of praying at those ruins and of experiencing the charm of their living memories. Very few places on earth appear to us more venerable and more fruitful in lofty inspirations. The Oriental Christians long believed that they could hear the Apostle breathe under the ground that covered his remains; they still believe it, and they say that the heart of the beloved disciple throbs from this profaned tomb, and its pulsations pene-

[1] V. the Année Dominicaine, (September 1887) our article on Ephesus.

trate the soul of the pilgrim. The breeze that trembles among the reeds of the Caystra, and the asphodels of the plain, seems still to murmur in heavenly tones: "My little children, love one another."

It is with regret that we leave this beautiful figure of the Virgin, the Martyr, the Apostle, and the Evangelist. But our regret is increased by our impotence to portray it as we should have wished. Bossuet alone was capable of so doing, and we should have left the task to him but that, able as he was, he could not have responded exactly to our design regarding Saint John or Saint James, on whom the great orator bestows the same meed of praise. For our consolation, and also for our acquittal, there remains the conviction that no human language is capable of extolling, as they deserve, the Sons of Thunder, who as the Lord promised should drink of His chalice — him especially whom the Holy Spirit has called, in the Gospel, the disciple whom Jesus loved.

Chapter IV.

The Disciples And The Holy Women.

Designavit Dominus et alios etc.
Erant autem ibi mulieres etc.

The Master's life was drawing to a close, and He was anxious to promote a more general and zealous activity among His fellow-preachers; not that He considered any decisive move necessary before His death, but that He wished to have a satisfactory organisation of all who should, in the future, continue to propagate the Gospel, under the direction of the Apostles. He saw that souls were ready for the divine message: "The harvest indeed is great," as He observed to the Twelve, "but the labourers are few."[1] He wished to increase their numbers Himself, to give them their mission Himself, to organise their Hierarchy Himself; in a word, to complete publicly the plan of the ruling and teaching Church. This is why He selected from the multitude that followed Him, seventy-two of the most enlightened and devoted, and joined them with the Apostles to assist in preaching, exorcising, and healing the infirm.[2] From their number it would seem that each Apostle should have six auxiliaries, under the supreme

[1] Matth., IX, 37.
[2] Luke, X, 1 and 17.

command of the Master: in this arrangement we clearly recognise the different degrees of the priesthood, from the supreme head to its secondary members. This organisation was to subsist for all time, without the slightest alteration. From the beginning, the sucessors of Peter continue to represent the henceforward invisible Head of the Church — in the double character of Bishop and Prince of Bishops. At his side, his brothers in the faith and his subordinates, the Bishops perpetuate the Apostolic dynasty in the sees of their particular Churches. Under them — not having received as they the plenitude of the Holy Spirit and the powers He confers, but participating in the priesthood and offering the divine sacrifice like them — the priests preach the word of God, remit sins and direct souls, — by their delegation and as their substitutes in these divers functions.

However, we must not forget that when Jesus Christ first sent the disciples two and two to prepare His way,[1] they were no more priests than the Apostles themselves were bishops. These latter were not to receive the sacerdotal character till the evening of Holy Thursday,[2] and this they did not communicate to their companions until after the Ascension, that is, till a time yet far distant. If then we suppose them to have been the direct predecessors of the lesser clergy, we have simply to compare them to the lectors and exorcists of our own time; although we must not insist too much

[1] Luke, X, 1: "Misit illos binos *ante faciem suam*" etc.
[2] Id., XXII, 19: "Do this for a commemoration of Me."

on this similarity, but regard them rather as catechists who preceded the missionaries in their apostolic journeys. In any case, the Seventy-two fully justified the Master's confidence, and the renown of their successful labours soon spread over Palestine.[1] In order to preserve their humility, Jesus called them unprofitable servants,[2] but He deemed them none the less His good and faithful servants, for whom He reserved a large share of eternal happiness.[3]

Their names have come down to us through a tradition which Baronius thinks may be contested, but which is, however, supported by many reliable authorities — by Saint Hippolytus, Dorotheus, Papias, and Eusebius, not to mention others. While reserving the right to criticise, we shall not be more particular than Doctor Sepp,[4] and shall name only the principal disciples: Matthias, who was chosen to fill the place of Judas in the Apostolic College; — Alpheus and Zebedee, of whom we have already spoken;[5] — Simon and Cleophas, the hosts of the Master at Emmaus; — Manahen, foster-brother of the tetrarch Antipas[6] and celebrated for his austerities; Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, who were among the number of the first deacons; — Martial, who is called the

[1] Luke, X, 17-20.

[2] Id., XVII, 10: "Dicite: Servi inutiles sumus."

[3] Matth., XXIV, 46-47; — Luke, XII, 37.

[4] Vie de N.-S. J.-C., sect. V, c. 8.

[5] V. book 1., ch. 3. — It is better, however, to consider them as adherents rather than as active disciples.

[6] Act. Apost., XIII, 1.

Apostle of the Gauls; — Trophimus, first Bishop of Arles; Maximin, first Bishop of Aix; Aristo and John, the priest of Ephesus mentioned by Papias, who lived with them; — Agabus, the prophet;[1] — Hermas, to whom the apocryphal book of the Pastor is attributed; — Silas, who accompanied Saint Paul on his travels;[2] and lastly Stephen, the most worthy among them of our attention.[3]

Of the greater number, history tells us little else than that they were ardent missionaries of the Gospel to the last days of their lives.[4] We have met Parmenas, Trophimus, and Maximin with Magdalen, on her arrival in Provence. Parmenas raised to the dignity of the priesthood, helped Martha during her whole life and at the hour of her death; Trophimus, consecrated Bishop, founded the most illustrious See in Gaul, the Romula Galliarum, where his memory is still revered; Maximin established his See at Aix, and rendered the last honours to the glorious penitent of Sainte-Baume, beside whom he wished to have his own tomb. We regretfully pass over the memory of Cedonius, and of others no less dear to the hearts of Catholics, of France in particular — not that we reject their legendary story as some do, but that we cannot draw out this subject to too great length. We revert to the traditions of the Churches that

[1] Id., XI, 28; — XXI, 10.

[2] Id., XV. 22 and 40.

[3] Id., VI, 1 and following, etc.

[4] We purposely omit the names of Joseph and Nicodemus, because they had no part in the ministry of the disciples, during the mortal life of Jesus.

claim the honour of having been founded by them, or at least of having been favoured by their preaching — traditions against which neither the insufficiency of written documents, nor the alteration of primitive monuments, can avail. Nothing can explain the agreement of witnesses who represent the greater number of French Churches — from Arles to Nantes, from Perigueux to Paris, from Limoges to Marseilles — in one solemn affirmation, if we refuse to see in it the proof of the evangelisation of our country by the first disciples: and let it be remembered, this testimony is corroborated by more recent dates accepted without difficulty by many other French Churches, also proud of their origin. If there had been general error, universal illusion, regarding the first Apostles — at an epoch comparatively near our own — these differences would not have been stated with so much clearness. The same self-love would have produced the same aberrations. It may be that our judgment is weak, but it seems to us more in conformity with good sense and rational criticism to adhere to these traditions, which the majority of opponents will admit are worthy of respect. There is nothing to prevent a strict examination of these documents, nor a rejection of those among them that may be held inadmissable after mature consideration.

While compelled to leave so many in the background whom we should have liked to bring into prominence, we must study two of their number with great attention — the most striking, so to

speak — Stephen the first martyr, and Martial, whom the Church herself connects with the Apostles. Stephen — whose Hebrew or rather Syriac name, Khalêl, signifies a crown[1] — belongs to the category of faithful who are called Hellenists; so, at least, we may assume from the Greek form of his name as given in the Acts, and from his close contact with the Hellenic Synagogues of Jerusalem. Tradition places him among the Seventy-two,[2] and the Holy Spirit has borne witness to his being full of faith and grace.[3] When the Greek disciples complained to the Apostles of the contempt with which their widows were regarded by the faithful, and the neglect with which they were treated, the Twelve convoked an assembly of the Church and agreed to choose seven trustworthy men who should supervise the distribution of alms. This judgment found universal acceptance, and the general vote of the assembly was in favour of Stephen, who by his antecedents was best fitted for this office, and whom the unanimous choice appears to have elected as the head of the deacons consecrated by the imposition of hands.[4] We know nothing of him as a mere distributor of alms; the Acts designate him rather in the light of a wonder-

[1] This name, perhaps the same as the Chalal of Esdras (I, X, 30), — Χαλήλ in Greek, recalling the *Khalil* of the Arabs), — has been translated by an equivalent, Στέφανος, which has the same signification.

[2] Cf. Smith, *Dictionn.*, *V. Stephen.* — S. Epiphanius, *Adv. Haeres.*, XL, 50.

[3] Act., VI, 5: "Virum plenum fide et Spiritu Sancto."

[4] Act., VI, 6.

worker, telling us that he performed many miracles and prodigies among the people.[1]

This prominence soon brought upon him the attacks of the Synagogues, in which the Jews of Alexandria, Cyrene, Cilicia, and Asia-Minor had assembled. He did not refuse the combat, and very soon reduced his adversaries to silence by the wisdom and vigour of his eloquence. To avenge themselves, they suborned witnesses to accuse him before the Sanhedrin of blaspheming against the law of Moses and of God; an empty accusation, but so much the more perfidious and certain of success. The populace was stirred up, the Sanhedrin assembled, and the Archdeacon was dragged before the tribunal by his accusers, who appear to have placed him in custody on their own authority.[2] The accusation in presence of the judges was more precise — "This man," said the false witnesses, "ceaseth not to speak words against the holy place and the law. For we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the traditions which Moses delivered to us." It was thus that they distorted the teachings in which Stephen announced and prepared the end of the servitude of the law, the emancipation of souls, and the adoration of God in all places, who wished to be honoured, not by bloody sacrifices, but in spirit and in truth. Nothing was better calculated to irritate these blind defenders of a law, of a sacrifice, and of a

[1] Id., VI, 8.
[2] Id., VI, 11–14.

Temple, whose symbolical and transitory character they could not appreciate. They had put the Master to death on this imputation, and there could be no doubt as to the fate of the disciple.

Standing in the midst of the council, Stephen remained impassive, and all who looked upon him believed that they saw an Angel, so resplendant was his countenance. To the interrogation of the high-priest—this same Caiphas who had dared to judge the Son of God—he replied in a magnificent discourse which has been applauded in every century. It is not, perhaps, a model of rhetoric, and "modern readers, accustomed to methodical order, and clear and compact arguments,"[1] are at first astonished by his style and method of development. Without by any means neglecting the resources which he could borrow from Greek culture, Stephen remembered that he was speaking to Orientals and to Israelites, and accomodated himself to their style of oratory. Commentators hold that Saint Luke gives the very words of the holy deacon's defence, exactly as it was taken down by the secretaries of the Sanhedrin.[2] After a summary of Jewish history, wherein he depicts the merciful designs of God towards His people, and the persistent obstinacy that prevented their accomplishment, he points to the Tabernacle and the Temple, of which they were the present guardians, scorned and profaned by their fathers. Then he recalls the words of Isaias, through whom the

[1] Fouard, Saint Pierre, c. IV.

[2] Smith, *Dictionn., V. Stephen;* — Fouard, *loc. cit.*, etc.

Lord spoke: "Heaven is My throne, and the earth My footstool: what is this house that you will build to Me? And what is this place of My rest?"[1]

Thus he refuted the accusation of disrespect towards a Temple in which God did not really dwell, which the children of Israel had themselves many times dishonoured, and which the prophets had distinctly foretold should not exist for ever. He made no allusion to the import of his reproaches and his exemplification of the ancient alliance; but had any doubt as to their intentions been possible, it would have been dispelled by the determination stamped upon their countenances, to listen to no more. The result had been settled beforehand, and the death-sentence was practically pronounced from the moment that they decreed the arrest of Stephen. Unmasking their hypocrisy, he concluded: "With a stiff neck and uncircumcised heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do you also. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? And they have slain those who foretold of the coming of the Just One, of whom you have been now the betrayers and murderers, who have received the law by the disposition of Angels, and have not kept it!"

Cries of death answered this denunciation. The judges, the witnesses, and the crowd gnashed their teeth, waving and shaking their menacing hands at Stephen. Tranquil in the midst of this turbu-

[1] Isai., LXVI, 1.

lence, his eyes raised to Heaven in an ecstasy, he cried out: "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing at the right hand of God." The Sanhedrites trembled, remembering the reply of Jesus to Caiphas:[1] "Hereafter you shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of the power of God, and coming in the clouds of Heaven;" but closing their ears, they threw themselves upon the accused, whom they dragged outside the town, to be stoned to death.

There was no regular sentence, such as would have required the confirmation of the Roman representative. The feast of Dedication was approaching, and it was one of those occasions that brought the Procurators to Jerusalem; but at this time their charge was merely nominal. Pilate had been sent to Rome by Vitellius, the Syrian legate, to account to Caesar for the massacre of Samaritans assembled on Mount Garizim. Caius Caligula, not approving the Procurator's conduct, caused Vitellius soon afterwards to be replaced by Marcellus, one of his accomplices, whose part in public affairs is as little known as his character.[2] It was probably during this interval that the dreadful scene which we are about to describe, took place, and which escaped, by its rapid execution, the vigilance of the tribunal of Antonia.

[1] Matth., XXVI, 64: "Amodo videbitis Filium hominis sedentem a dexteris virtutis Dei et venientem in nubibus coeli.

[2] In the year 37. — Marcellus was the last procurator of this series, Agrippa I. having received the title of king on the death of Caligula.

Stephen was dragged by his murderers outside the Gate of Damascus, to a small eminence which dominated the road to Naplouse.[1] According to custom, the martyr, whilst uttering the words: "Lord Jesus receive my spirit,"[2] was thrown from this height and stoned to death by the false witwitnesses who had accused him.[3] But before dying he raised himself to his knees, crying with a loud voice: "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep in the Lord."[4] Now, at this execution there presided a young man of the name of Saul, at whose feet the executioners had left their garments. He had taken part against Stephen in the council, and, on his own confession, the blood of the victim fell upon his head.[5] Happily, this was not a curse, and a short time after the persecutor became the Apostle Paul, going forth to fill the whole world with the glory of his preaching and the renown of his fidelity to Jesus Christ.

After his death, the martyr's body was suspended from a gibbet and abandoned to the insults of the populace. According to a tradition founded upon the narrative of the priest Lucian, the deacon's remains were so left for a whole day. On the following day, Gamaliel, who had not raised his voice in Stephen's defence as he had in favour

[1] "To the North gate on the road to Cédar," says the *Vision* of the priest Lucian.

[2] Act. Apost., VII, 58.

[3] Cf. *Sanhedrin*, c. IV, 4, etc.; VI, hal. 4.

[4] Act. Apost., VII, 59.

[5] Id., VII, 59 and XXII, 20.

of the Apostles,[1] repenting probably of his silence, engaged some Christians to take down the body during the night, and convey it to his own property at Caphar-Gamala, seven hours journey to the north-west of Jerusalem.[2] The obsequies were celebrated with great solemnity,[3] far from the Sanhedrin and for a time beyond reach of its attack, for the Romans had restored order and peace immediately after the crime.[4]

Gamaliel wished to be buried in the same tomb, where he had also brought the mortal remains of his colleague Nicodemus and his second son Abibas. The disasters of the war against Rome and the dispersion of the disciples were forgotten in the events which we have just related. It was only in the fifth century that the burial-place of the holy Archdeacon was revealed in a vision to the priest Lucian. The relics were secured by the Patriarch, John of Jerusalem, and brought to the Church at Mount Sion, pending the construction of the Basilica which was built fifty years later by the Empress Eudoxia on the very site of his martyrdom. This new sepulchre, to which the remains were solemnly conveyed and which all might believe would be permanent, proved but temporary. In the seventh century, after the incursions of the

[1] Act. Apost., V, 34–39.

[2] Caphar-Gama (the *town of Gamaliel*) is identified with *Jemmala*, which is situated about twenty miles from Jerusalem, according to tradition.

[3] Act. Apost., VIII, 2; — S. Hieron., *Epist.* CIX, 3.

[4] Champigny, *Rome et la Judée*, 1. part, c. II.—Mémain, *Connaissance des temps évangeliques*, p. 48.

Persians and Arabs, not a stone of the sumptuous edifice remained; in the twelfth century, the oratory built upon these ruins was destroyed by the Christians themselves, because it impeded the defence of the city, which was besieged by Saladin. Then all was left to solitude for long centuries, until the sons of Saint Dominic having become the owners of these consecrated ruins, undertook to rebuild the church and monastery formerly erected by Eudoxia.[1] We have been so fortunate as to welcome the dawn of these happy days in the very place where it began to break, and we hope to salute again, in the same place, the fulness of their radiance.

The East has kept Stephen, the first deacon; but Martial, the last of the Apostles, has been given to us. There is no legend so charming as that of this illustrious disciple, and it would indeed be a pity if modern materialism were to seek to destroy it. But we have no reason to fear: it rests on too secure a foundation, and posterity will relish it with the same confident pleasure as did our forefathers. The first Life of Saint Martial is attributed to Saint Aurelian, his companion in the Apostolate, and the ancients, on the testimony of Aymar of Chabannes,[2] showed almost as much respect for this book as for the Canonical Scriptures. A Bishop of Limoges in the eleventh century, did not fear to say to his priests before the whole synod

[1] V. le P. Lagrange, *Saint-Étienne*, 2. and 3. parts.

[2] D. Aurelian, *Sainte-Veronique*, c. II., p. 15. — Cf. Pierre le Scolastique, Bonaventure de S. Amable, etc.

that "to maintain this life to be apocryphal was to expose oneself to the condemnation of the holy Fathers, who had accepted it, and to that of the Holy See, where it had been received with honour." Although since lost, at least in part, it can be reconstructed with sufficient authority by local traditions, liturgies and hagiographies, which have made use of it. The blemishes that discredit more recent legends cannot, whatever may be said to the contrary, diminish the authority which this possesses.

Tradition tells us that Martial was born at Rama — the city of Benjamin which was disturbed by Rachel's lamentations after the massacre of the Innocents.[1] His father's name was Marcellus and his mother's Elizabeth — both of whom followed the Saviour from the first year of His teaching. The child naturally associated with the disciples, and it was from his hands that Philip and Andrew had taken the five loaves and two fishes, the multiplication of which fed the multitude in the desert.[2] Some have even thought that he was that privileged child whom the Master presented to the Apostles, saying: "Unless you be converted and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."[3] It is clear, however, that Martial attached himself especially to Peter, whom he followed to Rome, when the Prince of

[1] Matth., II, 18: "A voice in Rama was heard . . . Rachel bewailing her children."

[2] Matth., XIV, 17; — John, VI, 9.

[3] Id., XVIII, 2-3. — To speak accurately, there is little warrant for the supposition.

the Apostles established his Pontifical See there. After working two years together, he was ordered to set out for Gaul, with Aurelian and Austriclinian,[1] voluntarily accompanied by Veronica and Zacheus, who had formerly come with him from the Holy Land. In the course of the journey Austriclinian died at Elsa,[2] a town in the north of Italy, where his tomb is still venerated. After having buried him, Martial continued his journey through Florence, Milan — where he greeted Barnabas — Genoa and Marseilles, whence he travelled northwards, crossing the Gévaudan.

The traditions of Mende, le Puy, Clermont, and Rodez, tell us that he evangelised these countries as he passed, founding churches and depositing therein the relics which he had brought from Palestine — such as the hair of the Holy Virgin, which was given to Mende, and her sandal, which enriched the treasury of Puy. At length the holy travellers reached the confines of the Lemovici. Wherever they went, numbers were converted, in spite of the resistance of the pagan priests who were miraculously punished for their obstinacy, while at the same time wonderful graces recompensed the new converts.

At Limoges, where paganism flourished with extraordinary vitality, the apostle was obliged to contend against prejudices and passions apparently insuperable. Though cast into prison, beaten with

[1] "Duo presbyteri quos secum ab Oriente adduxit in Galliam." (Greg. Turon., De gloria Martyrum.)

[2] The ancient *Gracchianum* which became in course of time *Granciano*. (Cf. Ughelli, *Italia Sacra*.)

rods, and threatened with death, he was delivered by divine intervention, and again restored to the fruits of his generous perseverance. The Christians had grown so numerous that the author of the ancient "Life of Saint Martial" thought it necessary to contest their numbers and account for them by other apostolic examples bearing the same results. The Temple of Jupiter was transformed into a church, which tradition locates in the north transept of the cathedral, itself, like this primitive oratory, dedicated to the martyr, Saint Stephen.[1]

The first fruits of this prolific Apostolate were a noble widowed lady and her daughter Valeria, whom she had betrothed to the governor of the province. They had welcomed Martial on his arrival, and her house became the place of assembly for the first Christian neophytes. After her mother's death, Valeria broke her engagement with the governor, and in presence of the Bishop vowed her virginity to God. Incensed at what he considered an insult, the pagan arrested the young girl and sentenced her to be beheaded. She was executed at a place near the city, from which the martyr herself brought back her head to the very altar where Martial was celebrating the Holy Sacrifice. The people followed, both terrified and delighted, while angelic voices chanted: "Thou art blessed, O martyr of Jesus Christ! Enter thou into glory without end." The Pontiff took from the hands of Valeria the bleeding head on which

[1] The chapel dedicated to Saint Valeria marks, it is said, the exact site of the primitive Church.

he had placed the seal of supernatural life, and bathed it with his tears. Then he deposited near the altar the relics of the beloved daughter with whom he was destined soon to share the testimony of public veneration. Meanwhile, he had the joy of baptising the murderer, and of giving him the name of Stephen, in memory of the saintly deacon who had been his friend at Jerusalem.[1] Then he again set out on his course of preaching in the neighbouring provinces, leaving the care of the church at Limoges to Aurelian. We find him afterwards at Bourges, Tours, Poitiers, Angoulême, Saintes, Perigueux, Bordeaux, and Cahors, where he prepared the way for, or gave help to, Ursinius, Gratian, Frontus, Eutropius,[2] and the other pioneers of the Gospel. He had already sent Zacheus and Veronica in advance, to sow the divine word throughout the country of Bazas, and he had rejoined them at Soulac, whence they set out together for the evangelisation of Bordelais.[3] But he soon perceived, by the very abundance of his harvest, how insufficient was the number of labourers, and he went to Rome to render to Peter an account of his services, and to solicit fresh assistance from him. At this period we hear of the

[1] Several of our churches received from their founders the name of Saint Stephen — among others the cathedral of Toulouse, the first oratory founded at Bordeaux which become Saint-Seurin, etc.

[2] Whom the council of Limoges regarded as sent by Saint Peter or Saint Clement. (Labbe, *Concil. Lemov.*, ann. 1031.)

[3] Cf. Bernard Guidonis; — S. Antoninus; — Jean Bouchet; — Greg. Lombardelli, etc.

mission of several holy personages, such as Saturninus of Toulouse, George of Velay, Julian of Mans, as well as many others too numerous to mention, whose memory is kept alive by tradition and the local Liturgy. Returning to Gaul, Martial redoubled his activity, and if we can believe the legend, there was not a town of any importance in Spain and England which he did not gladden by his presence and his ministry.

A life so fruitful should end with supernatural glory. After twenty-eight years in the Episcopate, in the fifty-third of his vocation, the gentle son of Rama having become the zealous Apostle of Aquitaine, received from heaven the warning of his approaching death, which he joyfully announced to his brethren. He gathered them around him for the last time, to exhort and bless them. All wept and mourned; but he, hearing already the angelic concerts, sweetly said to them:—"Silence! the Lord cometh, according to His promise!" At the same moment a voice was heard saying: "Blessed soul, leave thy body and come to enjoy with Me the brightness of eternal light," — and the soul of Martial passed away while the Angels chanted: "Happy he whom Thou hast chosen and called; he shall live with Thee in Thy eternal tabernacles!"[1]

At the tomb of Martial many miracles witnessed to his sanctity, of which the most celebrated is the suppression of the plague which caused such frightful ravages throughout all Aquitaine about

[1] Ancienne, *Vie de S. Martial*, etc.

the year 994. The "fiery pest," as it was called, swept away men by thousands in spite of every effort. Therefore the Bishops of that region assembled at the tomb of the saint and through their metropolitan, Archbishop Gombaud, solicited his intercession. This was speedily granted and the dreadful scourge soon disappeared, leaving behind it the everlasting remembrance of the benefit obtained by the intervention of the saintly Bishop.

We, in our day, do not possess the monopoly of severe critics regarding old legends; they were to be found so far back as the eleventh century, exercising perhaps even more discernment and justice. It happened that the veneration with which some churches regarded their founders led to an exaggeration of the honour due to them. Thus it was that the holy bishops and martyrs — Frontus, Saturninus, Denis, Julian, Austremonius, and Ursinius — following Martial into Gaul,[1] had received the title of Apostles, which was considered inappropriate by the bishops of the province of Bourges. Assembling in council at Limoges, in 1029, with the Abbots of the province, under the presidency of Archbishop Gauklin, they had examined the question without coming to any decision. In 1031 it was taken up again, with a vigour that would do honour to our modern Devil's Advocate. The Benedictine Abbot of Solignac, after having observed that the title of Apostle should be given

[1] "Qui post Martialem in Galliam venerunt." — *Concil. Lemovic.* ut supra.

only to the preachers who came from Jerusalem,[1] refused to bestow it — as also did Gauzbert[2] — on Saint Frontus and on those others whom we have named: but he unhesitatingly conferred it upon Saint Martial, after the very ancient testimonies accepted by Aquitaine, France, Spain, and other countries.[3]

Aymon de Bourbon, Archbishop of Bourges, spoke after him: "No one," he said, "disputes that Martial was one of the first seventy-two disciples. This is why, following the opinion of a great number of learned men, we have, in our cathedral and before all our people, testified that he is an Apostle. . . . It is undoubtedly proved by the most ancient manuscripts accepted in all churches and in all countries, that the Blessed Martial has been inscribed among the number of the Apostles. . . . Here we have two priests who were formerly sent on a mission, with this object, to England, and who found in martyrologies and litanies of the highest antiquity, the name of Martial bearing the title of Apostle. This emanated, they say, from Pope Gregory the Great and the missionaries sent by him."[4]

[1] "Nullus apostolus fuit nisi qui a Jerusalem profectus est."

[2] "*Chorepiscopus*" or Vicar-General, author of a new Life of S. Frontus: "Scripturam de sancto Fronte novam."

[3] Martialis vero nomen in vetustissimis Aquitaniae, Franciae, Hispaniae, et aliarum gentium libris cum apostolis inscriptum comperimus."

[4] "Nemo denegat Martialem fuisse unum de septuaginta duobus. . . . Liquido autem constat quia per antiquissimos codices, penes innumeros locos et gentes longiquas, B. Mar-

Jourdain de Loron, Bishop of Limoges, said in his turn: "There has been a watchful anxiety regarding this subject, and the debate has ended by an appeal to the Apostolic See. Therefore His Holiness, Pope John,[1] has written us a letter in which he attests the Apostolate of Martial, and refutes those who dispute it; from which you may easily learn the feeling of the See of Rome on this point."[2]

It is evident from this discussion that the so-called barbarity of the eleventh century was not unmixed with prudence. It did not accept, with closed eyes, new phantasies, however seductive they might appear, but taxed their authors most severely, when they were influenced, like Gauzbert of Limoges, by love of lucre, *lucri causa*. Thus it declared the narrative that Saint Martial had been present at the Last Supper, and had served our Lord when He washed the apostle's feet, to be apocryphal,—"because," said Aymon, "this story does not coincide with the evangelical text." But it did not consider itself bound to reject traditions respected for centuries, and monuments universally accepted. It was content to recast, in suitable terms, those documents suspected of alteration,

tialis cum aliis apostolis scriptus est. . . ." (Labbe, *Concil. Lemovic.* ann. 1031.)

[1] Pope John XIX (1024—1033).

[2] "Super qua (altercatione) D. Joannes papa epistolam nobis destinavit, magnopere testificans apostolatum Martialis et redarguens omnes qui contra dicunt: unde facile claret testimonium verum Romanae sedis." (Labbe, *Concil. Lemovic.*)

with an impartiality worthy of all praise. For this reason, the testimony of the assembly regarding Saint Martial is precious to us — irrespective of the light which it throws upon the beliefs of our Fathers in the Apostolic origin of our Christianity. Though having no claim to the title of Apostles, the council of Limoges held that Frontus and his companions had none the less been sent by Saint Peter and Saint Clement to Gaul in the first century. It seems to us that we may still cherish our belief and congratulate ourselves upon it, as a proof of the predilection which God has always shown to France.

The Apostles and disciples were not the only ones who continually accompanied the divine Master. Mary herself followed Him,[1] with her sister-in-law Mary Cleophas, her niece Salome, and another pious woman whom it is not easy to identify, but whom commentators suppose to be that "other Mary" mentioned by Saint Matthew.[2] Martha and Magdalen followed this example, with their servants Marcella and Sara, frequently spoken of by ancient writers. The first is specially celebrated for the words attributed to her after the Saviour had confounded the Pharisees of Capharnaum. "Blessed is the womb that bore Thee, and the paps that gave Thee suck."[3] — To which the

[1] S. John Chrysostom, *Hom.* XXII *in Joann.* — S. Epiphane, *Haeres.*, XXVIII.

[2] Matth., XXVII, 61 and XXVIII, 1: "Altera Maria."

[3] Luke, XI, 27.—Cf. Raban Maur, Vie de St. Madeleine, c. XXXVI. — A singular devotion, the origin of which cannot be traced, makes Sara the patron of the gypsies or vagrants who often come to visit the Holy Marys of the Sea.

Master had replied: "Yea, rather, blessed are they who hear the word of God, and keep it." Two other women are mentioned in the Gospel, Johanna the wife of Chusa, Procurator or Intendant of Herod,[1] and Susanna, unanimously identified by the ancients with the bride of Cana, and we are not able to contradict their assertion.[2] Of this latter we know only the name; but the former appears once again in the sacred text, — on the morning of the Resurrection, when we find her with Magdalen, Mary Cleophas, and Salome on their way to the sepulchre, and receiving with them the salutation of the Vanquisher of death.[3]

A tradition adds to their number Berenicia or Veronica,[4] the companion of Saint Martial during his journey from Rome to Gaul and in his apostolic labours in Aquitaine. Zacheus, in the opinion of ancient writers,[5] had the care of Veronica — probably as Parmenas had of Martha and Maximin of Magdalen — but he need not necessarily be regarded as her husband. He did not, however, remain with her to the end, but retired to the lonely wilderness of Quercy, where he took refuge

[1] Luke, VIII, 3. — Smith, *Dictionn.*, (V. Chusa) says that Johanna had been delivered by our Lord from a possession or some other malady. Some think that Chusa was the royal official whose son was healed at Capharnaum. (John, IV, 46 and following.)

[2] Cf. Nicephorus, Hist. eccl., VIII, 30 etc.

[3] Matth., XXVIII, 9.

[4] Βερονίκη which a strange etymology derives from *Vera* and *Icon*, a Latin word and a Greek word the connection between which might well astonish one.

[5] S. Antoninus, *Chronique*, p. I, tit. 6, c. 25.

in the rock now known as Amator or Amadour, which he had substituted for his Hebrew name. Veronica continued to preach the Gospel along the shores of the Garonne and the sea, until it pleased God to call her to Himself.[1] She was weighed down by her years,[2] which chroniclers tell us had reached a hundred — and was truly full of days, and riches, and glory.[3] This was about the year 71, and the body of the saint was laid at the foot of Mary's altar, in the church at Soulac, surrounded by a great number of clergy and people.[4]

In accepting the services of these pious women, our Lord did not disregard the customs of His country and of that period. The Rabbis had long before undertaken the care of the most fervent votaries of their doctrine, and no one censured their so doing.[5] It appears, however, that Jesus established the innovation of their following Him in His travels;[6] but the presence of Mary sufficed to explain this, although the dignity of His character and His actions did not prevent malicious imputations. Condescending as He was to all, it was well understood that He would permit no familiarity, especially on the part of women, and

[1] S. Antonius, *op. cit.*

[2] "Confecta senio," says P. Subert, Bishop of S. Papoul (ap. *Act.* SS. of 4. Feb.).

[3] I. Paralip., XXIX, 28: "In senectute bona, plenus dierum et divitiis et gloria."

[4] *Legend of Cenebrun*, in Florimond de Lesparre (edited by M. Rabanis).

[5] S. Jerome, *In Matth.* XXVII, 56 (according to the *Neveh-Schalom*, fol. 56).

[6] Fillion, Comment. on S. Luke in h. I.

the Apostles had been astonished to find Him in converse with the Samaritan.[1] Martha and Magdalen, Mary Cleophas and Salome, testified towards Him an affection abounding in confidence, to which He responded with a cordial and loving friendship; but the Gospel moderates the Master's friendships so clearly that we need not discuss the point further.[2] Nowhere, perhaps, is the God more strikingly manifested in the man, as if He had felt the need of repressing the unbounded affection which the grace and charm of His humanity inspired.

Of these holy women, we know that they continued to live with the Apostles after the Ascension, and that they participated in the effusion of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost.[3] Tradition completes for the most part, as we have seen, the story of their lives, which were prolonged to an old age full of works, often rivalling that of the disciples in miracles and preaching. Johanna and Susanna alone escape this glorification on earth; the martyrologies do not mention them, while the visions of Catherine Emmerich may not be accepted as history. But God has not forgotten them, and Heaven repeats their names, in proclaiming the friendships of the Saviour upon earth.[4]

[1] John, IV, 27: "And they wondered that He talked with the woman."

[2] Matth., XX, 20–24; — Luke X, 40–41.

[3] Act. Apost., I, 14, and II, 1–4.

[4] As we have already said, some have wished to place among the number of holy women who followed our Lord,

Tradition sometimes distinguishes between the disciples, whom it divides into old and new. The first belong to the series of Seventy-two, designated in the Acts by these words of Peter: "These men who have been with us all the time that the Lord Jesus came in and went out among us, beginning from the baptism of John, until the day wherein He was taken up from us." [1] Stephen and Martial were they of whom he spoke; Philip, it is said, was not. He belonged to the converts of the second series,[2]—brought to the faith by the preaching of the first, either before or after Pentecost. Paul sheds so much glory over these later arrivals that they could in no way envy their predecessors; truly, he should be the disciple, not of another disciple, but of the Master Himself, and thus should take his place among the Apostles by the side of Peter, and at the head of those who had preceded him.

and afterwards Saint Peter, during his apostolate in Asia, the wife of the Prince of the Apostles, dying a martyr under the eyes of her husband. This opinion, which originates with Clement of Alexandria (Stromata, VIII, II), seems to us untenable. — Fouard seems, however, to accept it (*Saint Pierre*. c. XIV), and we must at least take note of it.

[1] Act. Apost., I, 21–22.

[2] Among the number of new disciples it is undoubtedly fair to admit several of those happy little children whom the Master was pleased to bless, and whose innocent importunities he defended against the zeal of the Apostles. (Matth., XVIII, 1–6; XIX, 13–15; Mark, X, 13–16). But we have no authenticated document to produce in favour of an hypothesis otherwise so probable.

Chapter V.

The Converts of Jesus Christ.

"I am not come to call the just, but sinners." Matth. IX, 13.

Of all the sentiments that can stir the human breast perhaps the sweetest is that which is experienced in welcoming back to the paths of grace and honour, a soul that has strayed afar. But how much more pleasing must be the emotion when the return is effected by him whom it delights, and who gives thanks to God for the favour! However estranged this soul may have been, it now becomes more than a sister, in the fraternity of faith and hope; it is his child, and his paternal feelings are awakened by the knowledge of his having brought to it new life. He has engendered it by his prayers, his exhortations, the secret tears he has shed, and the sacrifices offered to divine justice as the price of its ransom. And the longer he has had to await the hour of this new birth, so ardently desired, the greater the joy it has brought him, and the stronger the tie it has created between the regenerated soul and its saviour. One may snatch a being from death who is endowed with all the graces of youth and beauty, without feeling that fatal affection which springs from the peril to which one has exposed oneself in saving a life; but it is impossible to save a soul

without becoming attached to it for ever. In the same way, it is difficult for the sheep that has been brought back to the fold not to mingle with its gratitude a still sweeter sentiment, that which Père Lacordaire has so beautifully called "the indefinable attraction born of happiness given and happiness received."[1] — "And," to continue with the same great orator, "if natural sympathy is added to this impulse which comes from on high, there is formed from all these divine accidents which happen to these same hearts, an attachment that would have had no name on earth if Jesus Christ Himself had not said to His disciples: 'I have called you friends.' . . . . . It is friendship such as God made man and dying for His friends could alone conceive."[2]

In Jesus Christ, as in ourselves — and in His life as in ours — we thus conceive affections which are born of the conversion of souls. Though He loved all with an ardent love, He tells us Himself that He had come especially to save those who had strayed into the path of perdition.[3] He was thus predisposed to manifest thenceforward a more particular solicitude for them, and to rejoice more fully at their return to life, as He testified in saying: "There shall be joy in heaven upon one sinner that doth penance, more than upon ninety-nine just, who need not penance."[4] But in saving

[1] Lacordaire, *Sainte Madeleine*, c. I.
[2] Id., *ibid.*
[3] Matth., XVIII, 11. — Mark, II, 17.
[4] Luke, XV, 7.

them He inspired them not only with the love that raised them to God, but also with the friendship that drew them first to the man, because through the man they had come to know God. Hence there arose between Him and His converts a more tender and lasting bond of affection, which we must consider before concluding our study of the manifestations of His heart.

Sinners were not wanting in Palestine at the time of the Redeemer. Independently of the ordinary weaknesses of humanity under all conditions of life, circumstances added unusual vitality and energy to its errors and passions. After the civil war, a war with the stranger; then oppression from without engendering tyranny within; — slavery penetrating even to the sanctuary, installing there the intrigues of commerce; — faith tottering at once between scepticism and fanaticism; — pagan customs invading the lives of those resigned to defeat and submission; — while anger and hatred lurked within the hearts of them that still retained a vestige of manliness. It was from such surroundings that Jesus had to choose the objects of His solicitude. He began without hesitation, by selecting those who were considered by all to be the least worthy of sympathy — the publicans and fallen women.

In Palestine, the publicans formed a sect absolutely apart, not because of their ancestry, which was strictly Jewish, but by their profession, which drew down upon them the hatred and scorn of the Rabbis and Zealots. The collection of taxes was,

in fact, regarded as a religious and national apostasy. It was at least an implicit recognition of the dominion of the stranger and the pagan, with the added hypocrisy which still allowed them to call themselves sons of Israel, and to frequent the Temple to pray to the God of their fathers. The populace regarded them chiefly as extortioners who ruined them, as veritable vampires who sucked the blood from their veins, first of all for their own gain, then for the profit of their patrons — those knightly Romans whose name had become odious throughout the Empire.[1] And, as always happens, the most detested of this detestable hierarchy were not the general tax-gatherers who were far off, but the individual collectors who were under close observation, whose ways they might execrate though not openly denounce — in which, however, they were not sparing. Nevertheless, there were among them religious and honest men, who looked upon their trade as justifiable, and who did not seem to understand the hatred that pursued them. Some of them had been baptised by John, having steadily resolved to follow the Precursor's advice, who had not deterred them from practising their profession.[2] Jesus was of the same mind, as may be gathered from the parable in which He condemned the boasting Pharisee and proclaimed the Publican justified by his humble prayer.[3] But prejudice

[1] Dion Cassius, book XLII: Πάντες τελῶναι, πάντες εἰσιν ἅρπαγες. Cicero had, however, spoken favourably of them. (*Orat. pro Plancio*, etc.)

[2] Luke, III, 12, 13–13.

[3] Id., XVIII, 10–14.

continued none the less, and the Master Himself did not hesitate to say of the disciple who would revolt against the authority of the Church: "Let him be to thee as the heathen and the publican."[1]

One day, when He was passing the office of one of these collectors, named Levi-bar-Alpheus, at Capharnaum, He stopped and merely said to the publican: "Follow me." His disciples were astonished, but Levi did not hesitate a moment to take his place besides Jesus,[2] leaving his registers and his chests with the same impulsive eagerness with which the sons of Zebedee had left their boat and their nets. Astonishment knew no bounds when the Master accepted the invitation of the new disciple to sit at his table together with all those who followed Him. The Pharisees could no longer resist asking the Apostles: "Why doth your Master eat with publicans and sinners?" — And Jesus, hearing them, replied: "They that are in health need not a physician, but they that are sick. Go then, and learn what this meaneth: I will have mercy, and not sacrifice. For I am not come to call the just, but sinners."[3]

From this moment Levi took the name of Matthaï or Matthew,[4] that is, *Gift of God*, in remembrance of the grace of which he was the object. Taking his place among the Apostles, he shared their works and their labours with un-

[1] Matth., XVIII, 17.
[2] Id., IX, 9: "And he rose up and followed him."
[3] Matth., IX, 11-13.
[4] Fillion, *Comment in Matth.*, loc. cit.

remitting zeal until the time when the Dispersion separated them. Tradition is not unanimous on the part assigned him in the evangelisation of the world;[1] the most common opinion, sanctioned by the Roman Breviary,[2] is that he probably settled in Ethiopia after the wanderings otherwise attributed to him, and this is not unlikely. Before leaving Jerusalem,[3] he had written in Hebrew the Gospel which bears his name, and of which we know only the Greek translation, which, it would appear, we owe to the author himself.[4] The Hebrew edition was composed specially for the Judean Christians, as we clearly see in the text, where everything supposes a knowledge of life in Palestine; but the Gospel of Saint Matthew soon became widely known and was welcomed everywhere with the eagerness which it so justly deserved. If it is wanting in the style and picturesqueness that adorn the pages of Saint Mark or Saint Luke, it has yet a noble simplicity and a calm majestic grandeur of its own. It is *par excellence* the Gospel of the kingdom of Heaven, the Gospel of the Messiah-King,[5] whose words it so faithfully transmits: whence has come its designa-

[1] S. Isidore of Seville represents him as preaching in Macedonia, others say in Persia etc.

[2] On the 21st September. — This is also the opinion of Ruffinus and of Socrates. (Hist. Eccl.)

[3] Eusebsus, *Hist. Eccl.*, III, 24. — This opinion is the most probable.

[4] S. Jerome had seen the original Hebrew text (*De vir. illust.*, c. III), which he translated into Greek and Latin. (*Ibid.*, c. II.) — Cf. Fillion, *Preface on S. Matth.*

[5] Fillion, loc. cit.

tion in the work of Papias, fragments of which have been collected by Eusebius.[1] After eighteen centuries the work of the first Evangelist is still the delight of Christian souls and the glory of the Catholic Church.

According to tradition, Matthew lived nearly twenty-three years in Ethiopia, preaching, destroying the prestige of the Magicians whom he had found so powerful, building churches, consecrating Bishops, and founding convents for virgins. He had baptised Iphigenia, the only daughter of the king, and had inspired her with the desire of giving herself to God. Following the example of the Princess, a certain number of young girls shut themselves up in absolute retreat, living under a rule which was the prelude to the monastic constitutions for centuries to come. Matthew, who himself led the life of a cenobite,[2] directed these holy souls in the way of perfection, more even by his example than by his teaching. After the king's death, his brother Hirtacos seized the throne and resolved to share it with Iphigenia. Sustained by the exhortations of the apostle, the virgin refused to listen to the offers of the usurper, whose anger naturally fell on the author of his deception. He sent his soldiers to the oratory

[1] Λογίων κυριακῶν ἐξηγήσεις. (Eusebius, Hist. Eccl., III, 39) in which the Gospel of S. Mathew is designated by the word λογία. We must not conclude that Papias merely regarded it as a discourse: the word applies also to the relation of facts. — Cf. S. Iren., Clement of Alexandria, Origen etc.

[2] Clem. Alexand., *Stromata.*

where Matthew was celebrating the sacred mysteries, and had him slaughtered at the very foot of the altar; "so that," says the legend of the Roman Breviary, "he was truly the victim of virginity."[1] Thus he paid his debt to the friendship of Jesus Christ, in his Apostolate and in his martyrdom. Like his brethren he rests in a glorious tomb. His body, brought to Salerno, was laid in the Basilica which bears his name, and which had been erected by Saint Gregory VII. France is the proud possessor of some of his relics, which are specially venerated at Chartres and Beauvais.

Matthew was not the only publican whom Jesus converted. Another similar victory occupies a place in the Gospel which seems at first sight more considerable, though the inspired writer does not return to the incident, while Matthew continues to appear, with his brethren of the Apostolic College, in every page of the sacred book. One evening in the month of March, a few days before His triumphant entry into Jerusalem, Jesus arrived at Jericho, preceded and followed by an enthusiastic or curious crowd, in the midst of which He was almost invisible. A man named Zacheus, who lived in the town as chief of the publicans or principal tax-collector,[2] ardently desired to meet the Saviour, but did not know how to gain access to Him. His small stature prevented his seeing over the heads of those who lined the way which Jesus

[1] "Munus apostolicum martyrii gloria cumulavit, vere factus victima virginitatis." (On the XXI Sept., *lect.* VI.)

[2] Luke, XIX, 2: "The chief of the publicans."

was to pass, and all approach to the Messiah was barred, either because he had arrived too late, or because no one would make way for him. All at once a new idea occurred to him.[1] Setting out rapidly, he reached a point on the road where a sycamore raised its strong branches over the heads of the multitude. Zacheus climbed up as into an observatory from which he might satisfy his pious curiosity at ease. Vulgar pleasantries no doubt greeted his apparition; the same ill-feeling which had prevented his gaining access to the first row allowed itself full scope without disconcerting him. He had ample leisure to feel the keen edge of scoffs and jibes, but in the depths of his heart he already perceived that he should be wonderfully rewarded for his patience.

The Master came. When immediately under the sycamore He raised His eyes and saw Zacheus, whose whole being trembled under this divine glance. The joy of the publican surpassed his dreams; not only did he see Him whom he had so ardently longed to know, but the Master's eyes rested upon him, and in those eyes he read an affection in which he himself had a share. The crowd had remarked the notice which Jesus accorded the publican, and kept silence, as if in expectation of some new wonder. "Zacheus," said the Master, in a voice that seemed to come from afar, "Zacheus, make haste and come down,

[1] Id., *ibid.*, 4: "And running before, he climbed up into a sycamore-tree that he might see him: for he was to pass that way."

for today I must abide in thy house." The publican leaped to the ground, and in the superabundant joy of his heart, rushed towards his dwelling before the Master, not daring to address Him either in thanksgiving or welcome. Meanwhile the crowd murmured, saying that Jesus was going to lodge with a sinner.[1] And moreover what a sinner! One of the most prominent of these accursed publicans, whose very approach they would have prevented. What use was it, then, to be a strict observer of the law, since the prophet showed such preference for those whom the teaching of the Scribes likened to the servers of idols?

Zacheus stopped at the door of his house, not wishing that the divine Friend should cross its threshold till it should be purified for ever from all contamination. "Lord," he said, "the half of my goods I give to the poor, and if I have wronged any man of anything, I restore him fourfold."[2] He had understood that charity has always precedence of justice, but should never be separated from it; almsgiving throws a veil over sin which God will not allow His eye to penetrate,[3] and equity is the rule of divine judgment.[4] Thus he was fortified against fear and might rest secure of mercy. Neither was he surprised to hear the

[1] Luke, XIX, 7: "When all saw it, they murmured."

[2] Luke, XIX, 8: "Ecce dimidium bonorum meorum do pauperibus" etc.

[3] Job., XII, 9; — Eccli., III, 33; — Psalm LXXXIV, 4, etc.

[4] Psalm CXVIII, 75 and 172.

words: "This day is salvation come to this house: because he also is a son of Abraham." [1]

The Gospel does not again mention the name of Zacheus, nor does it even lead us to suppose that he became one of the followers of Jesus. Being less free than Matthew, on account of the many obligations of his charge, he was therefore not able to leave Jericho, where other duties perhaps imperatively detained him. Although the Master often demanded from those whom He called an obedience as prompt as it was absolute, He made allowance for reasonable delay; there were, He Himself said, twelve hours in the day,[2] and it was for Him to determine the moment for departure. The hour for Zacheus had not yet struck when Jesus left Jericho to go up to Jerusalem, and the tradition which places him among the disciples, does not number him among those whom it calls the ancients. He could not have been one of the seventy-two mentioned by Saint Luke, by the very reason of the time in which he was called. The Lord, in fact, went up at this precise period to Jerusalem for the last time, where He was about to consummate the work of our Redemption. We cannot then admit that Zacheus would have had time to regulate his affairs, as he should have done, before the crucifixion of Jesus; it would therefore seem that he joined the Apostles after the Resurrection, or, probably even after Pentecost.

[1] Luke, XIX, 9: "Hodie salus huic domui facta est; eo quod et ipse filius sit Abrahae."

[2] John, XI, 9: "Nonne duodecim sunt horae diei?"

His merit is none the less, for his heart was detached from the world from the very moment that the Saviour had crossed the threshold of his house.

We find him again at Rome accompanied by Veronica, whom some have supposed to be his wife, without sufficient justification for their assertion.[1] According to the Bazadaise tradition, Veronica had brought to Rome the veil on which the Son of God, when going to Calvary, had miraculously imprinted His features. Zacheus appears to have come to the capital of the Empire with Peter, whom he may have personally followed with Martial and Alpinian. Be that as it may, tradition points him out to us as coming to Gaul with Veronica and the Apostle of Aquitaine, with whom he was a zealous fellow-worker for many years. He had then abandoned his Hebrew name of Zacheus (Zaccaî, the Pure) to take that of Amator, which the people converted into Amadour. Retiring at the close of his life[2] into the bleak desert of Quercy, the Publican, becoming a preacher, devoted himself altogether to the evangelisation of the half-savage people who inhabited these regions. He had built an oratory dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, destined to become in future time one of the most venerated sanctuaries of

[1] In the sanctuary of Rock-Amadour an inscription recalls this legend, which has found favour with Bernard of Guionie, Saint Antoninus, etc. — Catherine Emmerich represents Amadour as the son of Veronica; this is, to say the least, not very probable.

[2] About the year 70, according to tradition.

Christianity. The pilgrimage of Rock-Amadour rivalled, in the favour of mediaeval Christians, that of Saint James of Compostella, and came immediately after those of Jerusalem and Rome.[1] Here were venerated the remains of the founder, brought from the narrow cavern where he had hidden his life and received burial, to the church of Saint Saviour, under the great arch facing the pulpit.[2] From the twelfth to the sixteenth centuries the most tender piety continually surrounded these relics. Protestantism tried to destroy both them and the memory of Zacheus. The holy body was thrown into the flames, hacked with blows of an ax, trodden under foot, and beaten with a blacksmith's hammer.[3] But the rage of the profaners could not achieve its object: there still remained a considerable portion of the precious treasure, which the canons eagerly gathered together into a humble reliquary of gilt wood. It is the same which still remains under the altar of the subterranean church, decorated with paintings which revive the memory of its most celebrated visitors; — Martial of Limoges, who dedicated the first oratory; — Serminus of Toulouse, who came here to pray with Amadour; — Roland, the nephew of Charlemagne, whose Durandal formerly hung from the ceiling;[4] — Dominic of Guzman, the

[1] V. Guide du pèlerin à Roc-Amadour.

[2] The body of Saint Amadour was found intact in the year 1166, in his tomb in the grotto.

[3] Odon de Gissey (contemporary). *Hist. de Roc-Amadour*, p. 15.

[4] Roland had, when passing, offered a gift of silver the

founder of the Friar Preachers, accompanied by his disciple Bertrand of Garriga,[1] inscribed like himself in the catalogue of the Blessed.

The devotion of former times is renewed in our own day, and people flock in large numbers to visit the holy places of Quercy. "Yet notwithstanding," says a modern writer, "Rock-Amadour is but the shadow of its former self. . . . . What a magnificent spectacle it was wont to present from the height of the ramparts, when it was adorned to receive the royal visitors and the illustrious pilgrims who came to offer solemn homage to the Queen of Heaven; or even when, in times of general absolution, it was open to the innumerable pilgrims gathered together from the most distant countries!"[2] A strikingly grand spectacle indeed must this immense rock have been, showing on its side the Basilica of Saint Saviour, its summit crowned by the castle of the Counts of Cahors with its massive keep, while at its foot were heaped together the humble dwellings of the clients of Saint Amadour, and still lower down a little rivulet which watered the sombre valley. On feast days or in times of great pilgrimages, banners displayed their various colours to the winds, bells pealed forth their joyous vibration to the answering echoes, hymns of praise arose in alternate response from one mountain to another; and when

weight of his sword. After his death, his companions brought back the sword itself.

[1] Gérard de Frachet, *De vitis fratrum*.

[2] *Guide du pèlerin à Roc-Amadour*, p. 109.

the shades of eve descended on the valley, thousands of fires mingling with the stars lit up the gloom, quivering on the rushing waters, and throwing into bold relief the jagged outline of the projecting cliffs. The ancient chroniclers are full of enthusiastic descriptions, of which our age gives but a feeble echo. Let us hope that the divine Guest of Zacheus will bring many with Him to the dwelling which He has made here below for him among His friends, whose very name indicates in the highest degree their devotion and affection.[1]

The Master had said in the Temple to the Pharisees and Sadducees: "The publicans and the harlots shall go into the kingdom of God before you;"[2] that is to say, they shall precede you in the knowledge of the supernatural life and consequently in the hope of eternal happiness. The conversion of Magdalen confirmed the second part of the divine assertion as the conversion of Matthew had confirmed the first. As the Apostle had been followed in the way of salvation by the publican of Jericho, Magdalen should be accompanied by the sinful woman of Samaria, whose conversion Saint John records.[3] Jesus being forced to leave Judea to escape the persecution of the Pharisees, went through Samaria on his way to Galilee. As He approached Sichar, being overcome by fatigue, He was obliged to repose for a

[1] Mgr. Grimardias, Bishop of Cahors, has restored the structures and revived the devotion at Roc-Amadour, where many pilgrimages still take place.

[2] Matth., XXI, 31.

[3] John, IV, 4 and following.

space near the well of Jacob, celebrated in Patriarchal history. Joseph had inherited the field which his father had bought from Beni-Hemor,[1] and on which he had sunk this well; so that the remembrance of these two Patriarchs hovered around the place and gave it a sacred character. Jesus sat on the brink of the well, and it was about noon. But the sacred writer shall give us the sequel.

"There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus saith to her, Give me to drink. Then that Samaritan woman saith to him: How dost thou, being a Jew, ask of me to drink, who am a Samaritan woman? For the Jews do not communicate with the Samaritans. Jesus answered, and said to her; If thou didst know the gift of God, and who is he that saith to thee, give me to drink, thou perhaps wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water. The woman saith to him; Sir, thou hast nothing wherein to draw, and the well is deep, from whence then hast thou living water? Art thou greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle? Jesus answered, and said to her: Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again; but he that shall drink of the water that I will give him shall not thirst forever; but the water that I will give him shall become in him a fountain of water springing up into life everlasting. The woman saith to him: Sir, give me this water, that I may

[1] Genes., XXXIII, 18–19.

not thirst, nor come hither to draw. Jesus saith to her; Go, call thy husband, and come hither. The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said to her: Thou hast said well, I have no husband, for thou hast had five husbands, and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband. This thou hast said truly. The woman saith to him: Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet. Our fathers adored on this mountain, and you say that at Jerusalem is the place where men must adore. Jesus saith to her: Woman, believe me that the hour cometh when you shall neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, adore the Father. You adore that which you know not; we adore that which we know; for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true adorers shall adore the Father in spirit and in truth. For the Father also seeketh such to adore Him. God is a spirit, and they that adore Him, must adore Him in spirit and in truth. The woman saith to him: I know that the Messiah cometh, who is called Christ, therefore when he is come he will tell us all things. Jesus saith to her: I am he who am speaking with thee. And immediately his disciples came, and they wondered that he talked with the woman. Yet no man saith: What seekest thou, or why talkest thou with her? The woman therefore left her water-pot and went her way into the city, and saith to the men there; Come and see a man who has told me all things whatsoever I have done. Is not he the Christ? They went therefore out of the city and came unto

him. In the meantime the disciples prayed him, saying: Rabbi, eat. But he said to them: I have meat to eat which you know not. The disciples therefore said one to another: Hath any man brought him to eat? Jesus saith to them: My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, that I may perfect His work. Do not you say, there are yet four months, and then the harvest cometh? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and see the countries, for they are white already to harvest. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life everlasting; that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together. For in this is the saying true; that it is one man that soweth, and it is another that reapeth. I have sent you to reap that in which you did not labour; others have laboured, and you have entered into their labours. Now of that city, many of the Samaritans believed in him, for the word of the woman giving testimony; He told me all things whatsoever I have done. So when the Samaritans were come to him, they desired him that he would tarry there. And he abode there two days. And they said to the woman: We now believe, not for thy saying, for we ourselves have heard him, and know that this is indeed the Saviour of the world. Now after two days he departed thence and went into Galilee."[1]

We have not desired to change one word of this beautiful narrative, in which the Holy Spirit manifests a delight of which the sacred text gives

[1] John, IV, 5–43.

us but one other example, in recording the resurrection of Lazarus.[1] The two pages are inspired and worded alike; it is John, the Evangelist of the heart of Jesus, who has written them, under the inspiration of the same love. Commentators, and in particular the Fathers of the Church, have striven to adorn them by more elegant and graceful language, without in any way adding to their original beauty.[2] The resurrection which draws Lazarus from the tomb and that which awakes the Samaritan woman from error, are works equally divine in their power and sublimity. To record them must be the task of Him who accomplished them, and after Him, what remains to be told?

The poor Samaritan, scorned and hated, not only because of her race but also because of her disorderly life, endeavoured, in spite of the prompting of her heart, to ward off the advances of her divine Friend. Let us not blame her too severely. Could she suppose that the gift of God came to her under the form of such tender mercy? Let us rather commend her, with Saint John Chrysostom and Saint Augustine, for a faith so humble, so generous, so apostolic, that the Master deigned to manifest Himself to her as the Messiah, whose coming she had never ceased to desire. "Following the example of the Apostles," says Saint

[1] The narrative of the resurrection of Lazarus in Saint John, ch. XI, occupies forty-four verses; this one comprises thirty-eight.

[2] It is, however, extremely profitable and pleasant to read and consider the commentaries inspired by these two chapters. — Cf. Cornelius à Lapide and Fillion, in h. l.

Chrysostom, "she abandoned her water-pot to carry out the work of an Evangelist and announce the Messiah, not to one man only, but to the entire city. She was not ashamed to say that He had converted her. Her soul was encompassed by a divine fire; she no longer regarded the goods of this world nor its renown, but only the love with which her heart was inflamed." — "Let the Apostles," adds Saint Augustine, "come to her school to learn how they must lay aside the urn with which they had formerly drawn."[1]

We should like to trace the history of the convert of Sichar. Catherine Emmerich, who calls her Dinah, attributes to her a willingness to follow Jesus with the holy women,[2] but neither the Gospel nor tradition warrants our accepting this idea. The Samaritan is pointed out to us in passing as an example of the resourcefulness of divine love in quest of souls; then she disappears, this wandering sheep, whom the Good Shepherd brought back to the fold and who is lost to our sight in the midst of His flock. But the Master's eyes follow her, and He knows that when He shall desire to see her at His feet she will run to Him gently at the sound of her name; she lives for Him only, and He guards the secret of her perseverance in His heart.

The same mystery, in which we love to contemplate the same happy intercourse of the soul with its Redeemer, shrouds the ulterior destiny of the adulterous woman named by Saint John.[3] It

[1] Cf. Ludolf, *Vita Christi*, p. I, c. LXII.

[2] *Visions*, III. part, c. XVII and XVIII.

[3] John, VIII, 1–11.

would be too painful to believe her to have been ungrateful to whom the Master had given so delicate a proof of His mercy. Never, in fact, did Jesus give a more complete or delightful manifestation of His mind and heart than in this instance, and the reader would be astonished were his attention not called to it even for a moment.

The Master was teaching under the porch of Solomon. He was seated on the ground — not having the official character of a Rabbi, which would have entitled Him to one of the low seats from which the Doctors taught their disciples. Suddenly the circle of His auditors opened to admit a number of Scribes and Pharisees who were dragging along a woman in tears, her face hidden in her hands, and almost fainting under their injuries and blows. "Master," they said, "this woman was even now taken in adultery. Now Moses in the law commanded us to stone such a one. But what sayest thou?" Thus they spoke to tempt Him, with intent to accuse Him should His reply appear objectionable. But without speaking Jesus stooped down and wrote with His finger in the dust of the pavement. After their first surprise they again repeated their question with greater emphasis. Then Jesus stood erect and said calmly: "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her," and bending down again He continued to write in the dust. It was a direct blow to the accusers. According to the law, the stone should be thrown at the condemned by the first of those who had borne witness

against her.[1] It was impossible to suppose that the witness might be liable to the same penalty, and his conscience should be free from all reproach concerning the crime he punished. And could they say as much for themselves, these Scribes and Pharisees, whose hypocrisy had been so often unmasked by the Saviour?[2] So the woman was soon left standing alone, the first of her accusers being the first to depart. "Woman," said Jesus, "where are they that accused thee? Hath no man condemned thee? — No man, Lord," she replied; and Jesus said: "Neither will I condemn thee. Go, and now sin no more." Thus, as Saint Augustine says, the absolution of the guilty woman was united to a reproof of her offence; the Lord condemned, not the sinner, but the sin.[3] This was not the object of Pharisaical justice, which hoped to compensate itself one day by striking a more noble victim. On that memorable day, where was the sinful woman? Did she follow the holy women and the daughters of Jerusalem on the road to Calvary, with tears of compassion for the Saviour of her soul and her life? We like to think so, and we attribute the silence with which Saint John covers the rest of her history, to the reserve with which it is fitting to surround all such memories. Obscurity is congenial to the resurrection of the fallen woman, and no hand may in-

[1] Cf. *Sanhedrin*, c, IV, § 4.

[2] Matth., XXIII, 14 etc.; — Mark, VII, 6; — Luke, XII, 56 etc.

[3] "Ergo et Dominus damnavit, sed peccatum, non hominem."

discreetly draw aside the veil which conceals, with her penitential efforts, the restoration of her honour.

The merciful power of Jesus was constrained to manifest itself in His agony and even in His death; it was on Calvary and from the cross that He wished to give its last proof by the conversion of the good thief, and that of the centurion entrusted with the command of His execution. There were united with Him in this supreme hour, two bandits, to be crucified for their crimes; one hung on His right and the other on His left, both sullenly defying the popular scorn. Whence came they? A legend tells us that they were two highway men, chiefs of a band famous for its criminal outrages against people and property.[1] After having plundered travellers on their way to Egypt, they had probably taken part in more audacious attempts in the surrounding neighbourhood, or even in the very city of Jerusalem, under the guise of patriotism; for from the Zealot to the hired assassin there was often but a single step. However, Roman justice had seized them and they were condemned to execution. The Gospel of Nicodemus calls them by the names of Dismas and Gestas, by which they are usually known. To

[1] *Gospel of the Infancy* and *Gospel of Nicodemus*. — Cf. V. Bede, *Collectanea*, etc. In the museum of Cluny there is an enamelled reliquary of the 13th century, on which the good thief is represented armed and carrying the child Jesus on his shoulders. — The same subject is reproduced on the cover of a reliquary of the same period, in the Vatican museum.

show their courage and their contempt of death, they had probably refused to drink the narcotic generally offered to the condemned, and joined their blasphemies to those of the assembled crowd and the Sanhedrites. Thus they posed as victims of independence and jeered at the failure of the Galilean who had not been able to save Himself.[1] There is nothing more horrible than the inclusion of the thieves in this concert of insults and outrages, and the Master's heart must have been sadly stricken on hearing their stinging jibes, and perhaps it was they who arose in His thoughts when He cried out: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." [2]

Scarcely had He pronounced these words than Dismas, the man crucified on His right, felt his whole being changed. "Neither dost thou fear God," he cried to his accomplice, "seeing thou art under the same condemnation. And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds, but this man hath done no evil." Then, turning to Jesus with his eyes full of ardent supplication, he said: "Lord, remember me when thou shalt come into Thy kingdom." [3] What had happened? A pious tradition tells us that Mary had prayed for the bandit, in recognition of the protection he had extended to her and her divine Son in the flight into Egypt.[4] Recognising him on Calvary, she made special intercession for him, and to her was

1 Matth., XXVII, 42; — Luke, XXIII, 39.
2 Luke, XXIII, 34.
3 Id., XXIII, 40-42.
4 *Gospel of the Infancy. — Gospel of Nicodemus.*

due the sublime absolution given to the condemned man. "Amen, I say to thee, this day thou shalt be with me in Paradise."[1] Here we have nothing that is not in conformity with the love of Jesus for His mother, with the tenderness of Mary towards sinners, or with the doctrine of her necessary intercession and her unfailing power with divine mercy in favour of mankind. Therefore we have nothing to object against the belief of our fathers, and if historical criticism here raises any opposition we leave it a free field: sentiment appears to us to have, in such matters, precedence over reason.

The name of the happy Dismas has been inscribed in certain martyrologies,[2] and honour is paid to him in several countries, notably in ours, which invokes him as the patron of repentant sinners.[3] No advocate could, in fact, better plead their cause, and this must be a tender joy to the glorified Jesus, to hear the promise recalled which He made on the cross to the converted thief.

While pardon descended on the head of Dismas, a Roman soldier standing in front of the cross, attempted to penetrate the mystery of this anguish, which he divined to be something superhuman. Discipline had made him the involuntary accom-

[1] Luke, XXII, 43.

[2] *Matyrol. Rom.*, XXV mart. — *Martyrol. Ord. Praed.*, *ibid.*, — etc.

[3] The church of Jerusalem commemorates him on the 25th March. — In the diocese of Versailles, devotion to the good thief is much practised. At Saint Peter's of the Vatican his image may be seen embroidered among those of the blessed on the *Imperial Dalmatic*. (Cf. Grimouard, *Manuel de l'art chrétien*, p. 401–402.)

plice of a crime; his conscience sought to free him from it, without his knowing how it was to be accomplished. The death of a Jew signified but little to him, the minister of Caesar's justice; but was this only the death of a Jew? Was this but the death of a man? He doubted it more and more as the hours passed, deepening the shadows of heaven, and rending the veils which still hid from him the divinity of the Crucified. With bated breath, no doubt, he had asked the dying man to manifest Himself clearly; a confused prayer assuming no definite form but growing in fervour and confidence. He did not say, like Pilate, "What is truth?" — but rather, "Where is truth to be found?" And this he said with a desire to find it, and with the conviction that this desire would bring him light. Suddenly the earth trembled, the rock opened at the foot of the cross, and in the affrighted silence which succeeded the clamours of the crowd, the centurion heard the voice of the martyr crying: "All is consummated! Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit." In the same instant the heart of the soldier was rent; he had understood, and turning towards his companions, he exclaimed in a ringing voice; "Indeed this was the Son of God,"[1] — to which all replied; "He was the Son of God."[2]

The centurion was not to be the only conquest of Christ on Calvary; even after his death He had

[1] Mark, XV, 39: "Vere hic homo Filius Dei erat."

[2] Matth., XXVII, 54: "Centurio autem et qui cum eo erant custodientes Jesum. . . . Vere Filius Dei erat iste."

still another triumph. Later on, a squadron of soldiers came by Pilate's order to assure themselves of the death of the crucified men, before taking them down from the cross. They made certain of the thieves by breaking their legs, according to custom. Coming to Jesus, they ascertained without trouble that He was no longer alive, but, to fulfil the regulation, one of them, named Longinus, plunged his lance into the right side, which came out at the left, having pierced the heart. But the legend says that some drops of the divine blood gushed out into the soldier's face and healed his weak eyes, while his heart was at the same moment opened to light of faith.[1] Both of them, the centurion and the lancer, were to become apostles and martyrs. The centurion, if we may believe Metaphrastes, immediately abandoned the service and became the preacher of Him whom he had led to death.[2] According to a tradition preserved by Saint John Chrysostom, he crowned his apostolate by a glorious death, and his memory is celebrated on the 15th March in the western Church.[3]

Longinus, still more fortunate, having left the army, retired to Cesarea in Cappadocia, where he announced the Good Tidings and became bishop

[1] Ludolf., *Vita Christi*, c. LXIV. — Cf. *Gospel of Nicodemus;* — Baronius, *Annal.*, ad ann. 34, n. 125.

[2] Metaphrast., die 16 Act., ap. Baronius, *Annal.*, loc. cit.

[3] V. *Acta* SS., XV mart. — Baron., loc. cit. — Cornel. a Lap. in h. l. — Baronius also gives him the name of Longinus; but he seems to get confused between him and the lancer.

of the church which he founded. After a long ministry he died a martyr,[1] and according to Bartolini his relics were deposited in a church near Lyons,[2] at an uncertain period. In any case he is venerated throughout the whole Church, and his memory is celebrated on the 25th March in the Roman Martyrology.

But above all, the most illustrious posthumous convert of Jesus Christ is Saint Paul, whose claims compel us to admit him into the Evangelical circle, although his name appears only in the Acts of the Apostles, long after the Ascension of the Lord. He was undoubtedly indebted for his call to the faith and Apostolate, not to the disciples, but to the Master Himself, through circumstances which are fully known to the reader, and on which he shall read here but a commentary.

Saul, originally from Giscala in Galilee, was born in Tarsus of Cilicia, where his parents had settled.[3] His father was a Pharisee,[4] of the tribe of Benjamin,[5] who had acquired the rights of a Roman citizen, we know not how.[6] After a preliminary study of sacred and profane letters, he had come to Jerusalem to be instructed by the Rabbi Gamaliel.[7] He was imbued with the

[1] Ludolf., *Vit. Christ.*, CLXIV, cit. S. Isidore. — Cf. *Martyrol. Rom.*

[2] At l'Ile-Barbe. — Bartolini, *De latere Christi*, c. VI.

[3] S. Hieron., *Script. Eccl. Cat. Paulus.* — Cf. Act. Apost. XXI, 39.

[4] Act. Apost., XXIII, 6.

[5] Phil., III, 5.

[6] Act. Apost., XXII, 28.

[7] Id., XXII, 3.

fanaticism of his clique at Tarsus, which now received a new impetus from the teaching of the celebrated Doctor, and more especially from the frequentation of the society of the Scribes and Pharisees of the Holy City. There was soon not a more ardent zealot of the law among the *Sofferim* of the Great School, nor a more implacable adversary of the Gospel. Though he could not take part in the Deicide, he was so full of hatred for the Apostles that he regretted his inability to satisfy it on Calvary. His intelligence and knowledge of the law soon gained for him a place in the Sanhedrin, where he appears to have occupied a seat during those scenes of blood which were soon to bring him into prominence.[1] He was an adherent of one of the synagogues at which Stephen disputed with the Hellenist Jews, — that of Cilicia, of which the Acts make formal mention.[2]

When the popular fury had extorted from the tribunal a sentence of death against the archdeacon, it was Paul who presided with sullen animosity at his execution, as he himself acknowledged later on.[3] The taste of blood thus having come to him, he sought a commission from the Princes of the Priests to seek out and punish all those professing Christ who resided in Jerusalem, whence he forced them to fly for refuge to Samaria. He himself directed the search, entering into suspected houses and dragging therefrom men

[1] As may be seen in the Acts, VII, 59, and XXVI, 10.
[2] Act. VI, 9.
[3] Act. Apost., XXII, 20.

and women, whom he cast into prison.[1] Then he demanded an order to pursue them still further. Furnished with letters from the High Priest, he set out for Damascus, escorted by sbirros and soldiers, proposing, he himself tells us,[2] to secure prisoners there whom he would bring to Jerusalem, where probably massacres were in course of preparation after the style of those prescribed by Herod and Archelaus. This was to be a revenge for the Pharisees who were formerly sacrificed in the forum of Antonia and in the amphitheatre of Ophel, and it mattered little to Saul that the victims were innocent of the crime, since they were to be immolated to the shades of his fathers in the Mosaic faith, or rather, in rabbinical tradition. He went, "breathing out threatenings of death,"[3] and was approaching Damascus when he found himself suddenly surrounded by a dazzling light,[4] and thrown upon the ground, while a voice cried in his ears; "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? — Who art thou, Lord?" replied Saul, with respectful fear, fully justified by the mystery that surrounded him, and in which already his upright and sincere soul divined the presence of God. The voice replied; "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. It is hard for thee to kick against

[1] Id., VIII, 1-3; — XXVI, 10-11.

[2] Act. Apost., XXII, 5.

[3] Id., IX, 1: "Saulus adhuc spirans minarum et caedis."

[4] Nothing can be more strange than the efforts of Renan to explain this miracle; never has his imagination been more exercised against good sense and the reality of things. (V. les Apôtres, c. X.)

the goad." Saul's astonishment and trembling increased. "Lord," he asked, "what wilt thou have me do? — Arise, and go into the city, and there it shall be told thee what thou must do." The men of his escort trembled at the sound of this voice, which was so much the more formidable for them that they saw no one. When Saul rose up, they took him by the hand and brought him, blind, to Damascus, where he remained three days without food. There was in the city a disciple named Ananias, to whom God revealed Himself in a vision, saying: "Ananias. — Behold, I am here, Lord. — Arise, and go into the street that is called Strait, and seek in the house of Judas one named Saul of Tarsus. For behold, he prayeth." (In fact, at the same moment Saul had a vision which showed him Ananias laying his hands upon him to restore his sight.) Ananias replied: "Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints in Jerusalem. And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that invoke thy name. — And the Lord said to him; Go thy way, for this man is to me a vessel of election, to carry my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel. For I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake." Ananias obeyed. When he entered the house of Judas, he laid his hands upon the head of the blind man, saying; "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus hath sent me, He that appeared to thee in the way as thou camest, that thou mayst receive thy sight, and be filled

with the Holy Ghost." Immediately, the scales fell from his eyes; he saw, and was baptised forthwith; then he took nourishment and recovered his strength. For some days he mingled humbly among the faithful of Damascus. But his zeal could no longer be restrained; he soon appeared in the synagogues, where he openly preached that Jesus was the Son of God, to the great astonishment of all who heard him. They said to each other: "Is not this he who persecuted in Jerusalem those who called upon this name, and came hither for that intent, that he might carry them bound to the chief priests?" But Paul continued to preach the divinity of Christ still more forcibly, and to confound the Jews of Damascus.[1]

Never was there a more marvellous conversion; even Magdalen's is not so striking or so fruitful. Paul is truly the most astonishing and the most magnificent conquest of the Saviour, and one understands how He wished to complete in him the series of His personal victories over error and evil. Likewise, one understands the grandeur and fidelity of the love that Paul should experience for Him who had thus sought him out, and in one bound had raised him to the summit of light and glory. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" said the Apostle. "Shall tribulation, or distress, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or persecution, or the sword? — As it is written: 'For thy sake we are put to death all the day long.

[1] Act. Apost., IX, 1–22.

We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.'[1] But in all these things we overcome because of him that hath loved us. For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor Angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor might, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."[2]

The whole of Paul's life justifies this magnificent declaration. Through fatigues, vexations, sufferings without limit or truce, he rendered testimony to his divine Friend, casting at His feet rich harvests of souls, gathered from one end of the earth to the other to fill the heavenly granaries, without ever feeling that he had done enough to discharge his debt. At sight of this little man with bare forehead, weak eyes, and frail body, the strong, the learned, and the clever of the world readily believed in their own judgment and almost scorned to hear him. But when his first words had convinced them of the ascendancy of his genius, his power, and his apostolate, the proconsuls and procurators, kings and asiarchs, the Areopagites of Athens and the Senators of Rome bowed their heads and became thoughtful. Some believed, like Sergius — others vainly tried to sneer, like Agrippa — all felt that a higher influence animated this soul, so much the more estimable that he had to combat all the revolts and

[1] Psalm, XLIII, 22: "Quia propter te mortificamur tota die, aestimati sumus sicut oves occisionis."

[2] Rom., VIII, 35–39.

weaknesses of the flesh. Jerusalem, Antioch, Ephesus, Corinth, and Rome listened in turn to him whom they styled the "Apostle of the Nations,"[1] and who is simply called in history "the Apostle," as if he had no equal in the Apostolic ministry.

In vain has Paul sought to paint himself in colours which we outline, and to manifest himself to all eyes as an object of contempt and disgust: his figure has assumed colossal proportions, such as no one has power to destroy. Despite his efforts, he stands before us with the great height, the proud bearing, the sparkling eye, the majestic posture of the Moses that Michaelangelo carved upon the tomb of Jules II. But the colossus of the Esquiline[2] is seated, as if tired of the weight of God; Paul has need of no other support than his sword on which he rests his hand, and ever standing, he awaits a fresh call from the Master to go, with the same indifference, to labour or to death.

To announce the coming of His reign, the Messiah had made use of the voice of John the Baptist, through whom all the prophets spoke, and who resumed the past: to hymn the establishment of His kingdom, the Redeemer has ordained the voice of Paul, in whose strains we hear the Apostles, the Evangelists, and the Doctors of all time. The Baptist and the Apostle derive their

[1] I. Tim., I, 11: "Apostolus et magistet gentium."

[2] The Moses of Michaelangelo may be seen in the church of San Pietro in Vincoli, on the Esquiline.

eloquence from the same love, to which they pay the same tribute, that of their blood, shed in the service of their divine Inspirer. They did not come by the same way; but they met at the same point of the road, and ended their journey under the same guidance, which led them to the same sacrifice and the same recompense.

Here ends the picture of the tenderness of Jesus for sinners, and in terminating it, we terminate also the vision of the personal friendships which moved the heart of the Son of God. The first in the order of time belonged necessarily to the most holy Virgin who gave birth to Emmanuel; the last could not be better directed than to this son of Benjamin, destined to realise with so much happiness the words of the Master: "My brethren are they who hear the word of God and do it:[1] For whosoever shall do the will of my Father, that is in heaven, he is my brother."[2]

[1] Luke, VIII, 21.
[2] Matth., XII, 50.

Chapter VI.

The Church.

"Aedificabo Ecclesiam meam, et portae inferi non praevalebunt adversus eam." Matth., XVI, 18.

Far above the affections which the mission determines is that which has for its object the mission itself: this is the principle and soul of all the others, and is as superior to them as life itself is superior to its various manifestations. Jesus should therefore love in His fellow-helpers, the work which He carried out with them, for which He had chosen them, and which for a long time had given them a place in His thoughts and in His heart.

Coming upon earth to redeem mankind, that is, to establish souls in the knowledge and familiarity of God, such as it had existed in the beginning, everything should be inspired by this design, which dominated all His thoughts and all His activity. He could lessen it in nothing; neither could He love anything that was not bound up with it. This we can realise from ourselves when the object of our life is definitely fixed, and when we have resolved to obtain that object manfully, in spite of every opposing obstacle.

But to establish the knowledge and love of God in souls, He should unite all souls and lives: He

should therefore create a society, manifestly superior in its nature and end, to that constituted by the interests of time. Knowledge and love of God lead to the possession of God as their necessary end, and if God identifies Himself with the formation of this knowledge and love, they must tend to a supernatural possession independent of time and in the end eternal. Unity of life shall thus create a spiritual society, whose activity here below shall persistently aspire beyond material considerations and aims, with the hope of attaining in the future a happiness in which the things of earth shall count as nothing, and upon which time shall have no claim. The society thus defined is called the Church; she is the beginning on earth of the kingdom of God, the joyous and glorious accomplishment of which she awaits in eternity, that is in the life really befitting the immortal soul of which this life is but the infancy.

In creating man, as recorded in Genesis,[1] God founded the Church, and He rejoiced in the contemplation of this society — restricted but perfect — formed of two pure, loving, docile souls to whom He looked for an indefinite succession of generations, faithful to His word and to His love. Humanity was really His betrothed, to adopt the language of Scripture — a betrothed whom He had delighted to create, adorning her with a beauty which He alone was capable of conceiving and of which the angels might well be jealous. He already saw the dawn of that day when, uniting

[1] Genes., I, 26-27; II, 15-25.

Himself to humanity by the communion of nature and life,[1] He would make her His spouse, whom He would raise by marvellous transformations to divine nature and life itself.[2] After the fall of Adam and Eve, when the whole divine plan seemed destroyed, eternal Love gave for the first time the example of what the Apostle should call later on the scandal of His folly.[3] He redoubled His tenderness towards His unfaithful spouse — promising to reinstate her in her former happiness, rendered more desirable by the fact that He was intensely grieved at her fall. We shall allow Ezechiel to interpret the thoughts of His wounded heart.

"Son of man, make known to Jerusalem her abominations. And thou shalt say; Thus saith the Lord God — When thou wast born, despised, abandoned by all, and cast out upon the face of the earth, I saw thy misery and said to thee: 'Do not die, but live.' — I tended thee and thou hast grown great, thou hast attained womanhood, beautiful and strong, but timid and shy of thy very beauty. And I passed by and saw thee. It was the hour for thee to love and be loved. I clothed thee with my own splendour, I pledged thee my faith and thou hast become mine. Precious perfumes and rare garments were thine; thy feet were shod with violet-coloured shoes, — thou wert

[1] John, I, 14: "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us."

[2] II Peter, I, 4: "Partakers of the divine nature. — Cf. Hebr., III, 14.

[3] I Cor., I, 23.

girt about with fine linen — thy arms, thy neck, thy ears adorned with circles of gold — thy head crowned with a diadem. . . . . Thou hast become beautiful beyond all expression; thou hast been the Queen praised by all nations for the charm that I had put upon thee, I, the Lord God! And proud of thy beauty, thou hast profaned my gifts and abandoned them without reserve . . . . not remembering the days of thy youth when I drew thee from thy native misery. Woe, woe to thee, saith the Lord God!" [1]

It is not difficult to recognise the Jerusalem of which God thus speaks. It is the privileged nation, to which was confided the promise of mercy and pardon after original sin; but it is also entire humanity, to which was promised the remission of its sin and a return of its former love. In the midst of time, so to speak, Jerusalem personifies the society of souls, the Church of past ages and that of ages to come in time and Eternity — from the day when humanity was born of God till that day when she shall consummate the union of her life with God. This is why Sion is always beautiful and dear to the heart of the divine Lover, whatever be her errors and miseries, because He sees in her, virginal humanity — the Catholic Church — born of His opened heart at the last hour of His Passion — which He will keep pure from all error and decay, until the consummation of time. Thus we understand why this foolish

[1] Ezech., XVI, 1–23.

and erring daughter[1] of Juda remains for Him the virgin of Israel,[2] from whom He cannot sever His heart, to whom the prophets addressed such bitter reproaches,[3] and made such consoling promises.[4] The reproaches and threats were but a figure or image, while the consolations and promises were real.

As the fulness of time approached, the manifestations of tenderness multiplied, — light shone more vividly upon the supreme token that He wished to give of His constancy, which is the Incarnation of the Eternal Word; and the object of this Incarnation was unreservedly proclaimed by the Prophets to be the extension of the kingdom of God to the very extremities of space and time, — so that there should no longer exist place nor time in which the name of God should not be acclaimed and blessed.[5] It is therefore the formation of a new humanity, which adores the Father in spirit and in truth, which shall be for ever one by the perfect union of all its members, like that which exists between the Father and the Son, sent by Him to accomplish this design. It was a joyful moment when Mary gave the Word Incarnate to the world, joyful especially for the divine mediator. He had so long desiderated it — *with*

[1] Jerem, XXXI, 22: "Filia vaga."

[2] Id., XVIII, 13: "Virgo Israël" etc.

[3] Isaias, Ezechiel, etc. *passim*.

[4] All the prophets announcing the Messiah and the Redemption.

[5] Malach., I, 11. — Cf. John, IV, 21.

desire,[1] as He Himself tells us — that His wisdom allowed His mercy to intervene. The Angels also, who saluted the birth of the Redeemer, sang; "Glory to God on high" before promising "peace on earth to men of good will." From the very beginning of the Messiah's mission no doubt could be felt as to the ideal He pursued — the kingdom of God established for ever among men. Not only is the word constantly on His lips, but it is evident that the thought is always present to His mind and shapes all His plans. If the Apostles, deceived by the concentration of their first efforts upon the Jewish nation, were persuaded of the establishment of the kingdom of Israel in the near future,[2] they were soon enlightened that this was the increase by which God would recompense the fidelity of those who seek first His kingdom, and that His kingdom should be, before all else, the object of their efforts.[3] Frequently, even, their hopes are frustrated by comparisons in which the customs of terrestial nations are contrasted with those of the kingdom of God, and condemned as unbecoming the subjects, and especially the Princes of the new Israel.[4] Certainly, Jesus did not repress these ebullitions of Jewish patriotism and seemed sometimes to enjoy a mysterious misunderstanding in order to leave His disciples the merit of a well-considered and reasoned adherence to the teach-

[1] Luke, XXII, 15: "With desire I have desired."
[2] Matth., X, 5; XV, 24.
[3] Matth., VI, 33; — Mark, IV, 24; — Luke, XII, 31.
[4] Luke, XXII, 24–27.

ings He propounded; never did He encourage them in the hope which animated them till the very night of Holy Thursday, or rather, till the very moment of the Ascension.[1] Vainly did the multitude offer Him a crown; He disappeared by a flight which separated Him even from His Apostles for a period sufficient to destroy all hope.[2] Therefore, if they deceived themselves, it was because they listened with prejudice and had not meditated deeply on the words they heard; later on they came to see them clearly, and to direct all their efforts to the realisation of the design which they had so long misunderstood. The Spirit of the Master had enlightened them, and cleared away all the doubts with which a too narrow conception of the people of God had filled them.

As for Jesus, we see Him incessantly labouring to promote the establishment of the new society. The salvation of even one soul is precious to Him, as He Himself teaches us in the parables of the lost sheep, the lost groat, and the Prodigal Son, and on numerous other occasions when we feel His heart expanding at the thought of a sinner doing penance. In the order of facts, Magdalen, Matthew, Zacheus, and the Samaritan woman point to partial conquests marvellously accomplished, and prove His solicitude for each soul in particular; even on the cross, when the salvation of all humanity is achieved, He does not neglect to gather on His way to the tomb, the soul of the

[1] John, XIV, 22; — Act. Apost., I, 6.
[2] John, VI, 15.

penitent thief. But though resolved that He should die, if need be, for the salvation of one alone — because one alone appeared to Him sufficient to justify the shedding of His blood — His principal object was none the less the creation of the society of souls. The Church appears everywhere to His questioning gaze, and His eyes always rest upon her. She is the Vineyard to which He sends, as workers, all whom He meets from the first to the eleventh hour of the day — everyone seemed to Him desirable. She is the Harvest already white, but for which He has not sufficient reapers. She is the Banquet to which He invites, with insistance, all those who pass by the way, rich and poor, young and old, strong and weak; and from which He excludes those only who do not appreciate the honour which He does them by His invitation. She is the Nuptial Feast of the king's son, or of Himself with all humanity, represented by the assemblage of the lowly and the poor whom He calls to sit with Him at the table of His Father.[1]

And to attain this end, He requires from His assistants the most complete detachment, even to the renunciation of the most lawful affections. He does not allow the slightest hesitation, were it even at the deathbed of a father, and to enroll them forthwith in the kingdom of the living, He orders that the dead shall bury their dead.[2] He

[1] V. in the Gospel, the successive parables of the Kingdom of God.

[2] Matth., VIII, 22: "Dimitte mortuos sepelire mortuos."

Himself gives the example. When reminded of His mother and brothers who sought Him, He affirmed without hesitation that every soul that engendered the kingdom of God was His mother, and that all who joined Him in spreading the new society were His brothers.[1]

But He knew well that as this society would not assure to its members the possession of goods and the enjoyment of the pleasures of this world, it would be opposed from the first, and that resistance would be especially directed against Himself. He measured this opposition with a firm and steady hand; He hid nothing from His disciples and even seemed pleased to contemplate the sufferings and humiliations through which they should pass. "Behold," He said to them on the eve of the triumph of Palms, which might have deluded them as to the issue of the contest; "Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things shall be accomplished which were written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man. For He shall be delivered to the gentiles, and shall be mocked, and scourged, and spit upon; and after they have scourged Him they will put Him to death, and the third day He shall rise again."[2] And that they might fully realise the degree of ignominy to which He should descend, He did not spare them the horrible details of His crucifixion: "The Son of Man shall be betrayed to the chief priests and the Scribes, and they shall condemn

[1] Mark, III, 32–35; — Luke, VIII, 21.
[2] Luke, XVIII, 31–33.

Him to death, and shall deliver Him to the gentiles to be mocked, and scourged, and crucified."[1] To speak accurately, they did not clearly understand what this signified, and if they suspected, it was but to exclaim with Peter; "Lord, be it far from Thee; this shall not be unto Thee," which elicited the reply; "Go behind me, Satan; thou art a scandal unto me."[2]

We cannot reject this conviction, since it is the only one admissible, — the foundation of the Church is bound up with the sacrifice on the cross. To make of humanity the chosen people, of whom God should be the Eternal King, He should first ransom them, and since there is no redemption without the shedding of blood,[3] He should wash them in the blood shed on Calvary. For this reason His soul is ever consumed with a desire to drink of the chalice into which the hand of divine Justice has poured expiating bitterness; if He yields to delay in the discharge of man's debt, it is because the delay itself is suffering and expiation — not the less painful nor the less profitable.

At length the desired moment comes. The chalice is held to the Redeemer's lips and the agony of Gethsemani begins — that dreadful prelude to the unutterable agony of Golgotha. The soul and body of Jesus tremble; agitation and weakness steal upon Him in presence of the heavy

[1] Matth., XX, 17-19.

[2] Matth., XVI, 23. — Mark, VIII, 33.

[3] Hebr., IX, 22: "Without the shedding of blood there is no remission."

trial; His will conquers these fears, and dispels this despondency. After one cry of horror: "If it be possible let this chalice pass from me," come words of resignation and love: "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt."[1] We understand this without difficulty: the man, as He truly is, can but desire the removal of the chalice — but the God, whom He also is, cannot renounce His longing to purify the betrothed of His heart, and we know beforehand what shall be the resolve of this Victim of our salvation. Might we not always suspect with what wonderful intuition love would multiply the forms of suffering, in testimony of its tenderness? This chalice, before which His whole being had trembled, He now relished, one might say, with intense delight; His lips turned away from the draught presented to mitigate His fever, and His soul was not free from anguish until it had acquired the right to affirm that all was consummated.[2]

But when the soldier opened His side with a thrust of his lance, the Church issued from the wound, radiant and triumphant; as the first Eve, mother of the living, issued from the opened side of Adam.[3] The Father had but to awake His Son

[1] Matth., XXVI, 39: "Verumtamen non sicut ego volo sed sicut tu."

[2] John, XIX, 30: "Consummatum est."

[3] S. August., *Tract.* 120 *in Joann.* — "Prima mulier facta est de latere viri dormientis et appellata est vita, materque vivorum. . . . Hic secundus Adam, inclinato capite, in cruce dormivit, ut inde formaretur ei conjux, quae de latere dormientis effluxit."

and present Him with His bride, and pronounce over their alliance the blessing which assured to them perpetual fecundity.[1]

Three days after, Christ, the Vanquisher of death, drew forth from His tomb as from a cradle, the new Eve, the mother of His true children, beautiful and without stain,[2] and presented her the centuries to come as her indestructible domain, since He had guaranteed her its possession against every attempt of Hell. With what loving glances must He have welcomed her, at the moment of her entrance into life, whom John the Evangelist was afterwards to contemplate in his visions at Patmos, — "coming down out of Heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband"[3] — clothed with the sun and the moon beneath her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars,[4] and swift as the eagle that bears her on his wings.[5] She needed but a hair to bind His heart, a glance of the eye to throw Him into ecstasy; He was all to her as she was all to Him — His beloved, His only one, whom He longed to crown as the sovereign of His soul and life, descended from the serene heights of Hermon and Libanus.[6]

The Apostles could have no difficulty in understanding the authority without limit and without

[1] Genes., II, 22–23.
[2] Cant., IV, 7.
[3] Apoc., XXI, 2.
[4] Id., XII, 1.
[5] Apoc., XII, 14.
[6] Cant., *passim*.

appeal which He had conferred on her, when He said to them: "If he will not hear them, tell the Church; and if he will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as the heathen and publican"[1] — that is to say, as one separated from My family and My heritage. "He has no longer any part with Me, and that which shall overtake him is the portion reserved for the hypocrits and the violent, in weeping and gnashing of teeth."[2] Likewise, it was easy for them to understand the reason of the affection which Jesus testified towards them, and the measure of which was determined by their share in the service of the Church. In Cephas, the first among them, Jesus loved the corner-stone of the new edifice — as in the other Apostles He loved the walls of the heavenly Jerusalem, or the gates through which they were favoured to enter — and in the disciples the living stones of which they were built.[3] All these stones were precious in His sight, but not all equally so; their brilliancy, their size, their setting were different. All these souls, though privileged to form the crown of the divine Bride, had not manifested the same love nor acquired the same merit; none could complain of his place or his part, but the thrones nearest to that on which Jesus had seated His Beloved belonged to her most faithful and most useful servants. He had made this clear beforehand to the sons of Zebedee, when they had asked to be

[1] Matth., XVIII, 16–17.

[2] Matth., XXIV, 51.

[3] "Quae construitur in coelis vivis ex lapidibus." (*Offic. Dedicat. Hymnus.*)

seated on His right and on His left, without considering the chalice which the most zealous of the Master's fellow-workers should drink with Him.

For several days He left His Church under the apparent tutelage of the Synagogue — that Agar whose sons should never more aspire to the heritage of the legitimate children;[1] but He hastened to emancipate her by a prudent progression which extends from Pentecost to the first Council. Then, as the Synagogue pursued her, proselytising, He completely broke with her by the destruction of Jerusalem itself and the Temple, after having dispersed His messengers to bear the Good Tidings to the four winds of heaven, and to initiate His universal kingdom. From this moment the real history of the Catholic Church begins, though we might say that it began on the very day when God created the first man and the first woman; but, before this time the eyes of man had not yet seen her in her true character and in the activity which is her special prerogative. Henceforth, nations should walk in her light, and the kings of earth, together with their people, should exist only for her glory.[2]

It is all-important not to be deceived on this point: in returning to Heaven to take His place at the right hand of His Father, He has left His Church in the world as a continuation of Himself — His other self — in her character as the bride who watches jealously over the interests of her

[1] Genes., XXI, 10. — Galat., IV, 22–31.

[2] Apoc., XXI, 24–26.

spouse.[1] In order to accomplish this duty and attain this end, she has received full intelligence of the mission and omnipotence of her founder. She is not the Truth, but the only one guardian of the Truth, the infallible interpreter of the revelation which God has made to her, and the light and life of the intelligence. She possesses therefore a sovereign authority over all minds and all doctrines, at all times and under all circumstances. Moreover, as a result of the strict union between faith and morals, she is the supreme arbiter of the moral life, both private and public, and people are in general as much subject to her as they are individually. For this reason, there is no escape from her authority, however high our position may be: the peasant and the monarch are alike in the same condition, since they are alike the subjects of Christ, or rather, the children that He has given to His Church. Not only does He sanction her decrees on earth, by the judgment which He exercises over all existence to the threshold of eternity, but even in time He avenges her injuries without pity, by the chastisments which are recorded in history. Woe to him who causes her sorrow! Her tears have a power over the heart of the King of Kings and the Sovereign of Sovereigns, that nothing can counteract; her path is strewn with the sceptres and swords that have risen up in menace against her. This has been proved in our time, and the sighs of the

[1] "Ut vera sponsa meum zelabis honorem." (*Offic. S. Thesesiae.*)

Church in her oppression have sufficed, like the breath of the tempest, to scatter the bees of the Cæsars and to break the lily of the Frankish kings.

It is so painful to her to enter thus into contest with the various representatives of divine wisdom and authority, that she never does so of her own free choice. Far from endeavouring to fetter the human mind, she encourages, on the contrary, all its strength, in memory of Him who has founded her and who Himself calls her Truth,[1] Light,[2] and Knowledge.[3] Far also from oppressing rightfully constituted powers, she willingly takes her stand by their side, to aid and protect them in their need, because she knows that they emanate from her Spouse, who is the only true master of all that exists.[4] The friend of all progress in which she can discern a means of better serving humanity and God, she remains disinterested regarding the things of time, to which, however, she can lay claim by more than one title. As Bossuet magnificently says, "she asks only a free passage." But it is her right to exact it, and her honour has always been to claim it in giving, if necessary, the last drop of her blood to obtain and preserve it. God, who has promised to be with her till the consummation of the world,[5] undertakes to Himself to

[1] John, XIV, 6: "Ego sum veritas."

[2] Id., XII, 46: "Ego lux in mundum veni," etc.

[3] I Reg., II, 3: "Deus scientiarum."

[4] Zach., IV, 12; — II Macch., XIV, 26. — Rom., XIII, 1.

[5] Matth., XXVIII, 20: "Usque ad consummationem saeculi."

assure her of it at the hour most fitting, of which He alone can judge. For, history is witness that God is pleased to send His heavenly spouse trials which are well calculated to baffle the discretion of man. In sending her to conquer souls, He would not, it is true, spare her the resistance which pride and passion necessarily oppose to truth and justice; hence, unless by a permanent miracle which is outside the law of life, the Church must pass through the ordinary trials incidental to every contest — with alternations of success and failure — both more or less prolonged, in awaiting the final triumph of Truth. But we do not allude to these necessary trials: we speak of those that seem inexplicable, by the conditions in which they are produced or endure. It is a mystery which perplexes the most discerning and steadfast souls; a temptation to seduce, if possible, even the elect,[1] as the Gospel says in prophesying one of these trials.

Sometimes the Son of Man appears like lightning,[2] on the clouds[3] gathered together in one instant in the brightest sky. The storm bursts at the very moment when it was least expected; it breaks, submerges, annihilates all that it can reach, — and when it has passed, nothing is left but ruins, where formerly all was splendour and prosperity. Yet if the hurricane lasted only for an

[1] Mark, XIII, 22.

[2] Matth., XXIV, 27: "As the lightning cometh out of the east." etc.

[3] Mark, XIII, 26: "And then shall they see the Son of Man coming in the clouds."

hour! But sometimes whole days do not suffice, and the sun seems to rise only to witness the mournful result, the termination of which cannot be foreseen. Convictions are shaken, courage is broken, and hope is almost extinguished, even among the staunchest.

The God who drew the Church from His bleeding side is a jealous God,[1] who cannot suffer the slightest stain in His Bride, and must purify her from all that might sully her. But in passing through this world it is difficult for her to preserve the spotlessness of her shoes and mantle from the dust and mud, the briars and sharp-pointed rocks. The favour which is sometimes accorded her lulls her to sleep, and the weariness of her fatigues induces her to rest upon the wayside. Then the hand of the Lord is raised, persecution is let loose upon her, and He permits it to disturb this delusive security, till she has been prepared for the return of true peace. The means employed by Providence are often found in the passions of men themselves, who thus become — to use the words of Pius IX — the unjust instruments of divine Justice. They shall be disdainfully cast aside when they shall have accomplished their work, and the oblivion into which they shall fall would be better than the hateful remembrance of their existence, — for all are not forgotten, and their wage is worse than death. The Spouse, whom they have aided in rendering more dear, is — like the Esther of Scripture — fully avenged for their

[1] Exod., XXXIV, 14: "The Lord his name is Jealous."

insults, on the day when the King of Kings offers her His sceptre in pledge of His love.[1] If He prolongs the trial, it is to render the triumph more striking. He permits the Amalekite to strut along in his questionable glory, in order to allow time to add some cubits to the gibbet on which he shall be nailed. As the Apostle says: "For yet a little and a very little while, and He that is to come, will come, and will not delay."[2] He announces it Himself: "Behold, I come quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to his works."[3]

To each one according to his works! Happy then are those who shall have helped the Church throughout the difficulties of her progress! — "Peace on them, and mercy,"[4] according to the words of Saint Paul, because, "He that honoureth his mother is as one that layeth up a treasure,"[5] and the Church is our mother,[6] who has given life to our souls, and through whom we shall attain eternal life. This, then, is the way to lay up treasure for that supreme day, to honour our holy mother the Church, of whom our ancestors spoke with such respectful love; this assures our entrance into the heavenly Jerusalem, while awaiting the increase — as the Gospel promises — of blessings in the present.

[1] Esther, XV, 14.

[2] Hebr., X, 37.

[3] Apoc., XXII, 12.

[4] Galat., VI, 16: "Pax super illos et misericordia."

[5] Eccli., III, 5: "Sicut qui thesaurizat, ita et qui honorificat matrem suam."

Montalambert, Disc. on Rome 1848.

We cannot finish this study better than by quoting one of the most simple and beautiful pages that Bossuet has ever written. "Jesus Christ," he says, "is in His Church, accomplishing all through His Church! The Church is in Jesus Christ, accomplishing all through Jesus Christ. This is true, and most true: he who has seen it gives testimony of it. Glory to the faithful witness, who is Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father! Such is then the composition of the Church, a blending of the strong and the weak, the good and the wicked, hypocritical and scandalous sinners; the unity of the Church embraces all and profits by all. The faithful see in the one all that they must imitate, and in the other all that they must overcome with courage, reprove with vigour, support with patience, aid with charity, listen to with condescension, and regard with fear. And those who remain faithful, and those who fall away, equally serve the Church: her faithful see in these latter the example of their laxity, and seeing the convictions of the others, all are astonished, edified, confounded, and encouraged — as much by the workings of grace as by those of rigour and justice. . . . This Church, composed of such an abhorrent mixture, extricates herself nevertheless and frees herself from her chaff. The day is appointed when nothing shall be left but good grain; all the chaff shall be burnt in the fire. One part of this separation is visibly accomplished in time, by schisms and heresies; the other takes place in the heart and is confirmed on the day of

death, each one going to his own place. The great universal and public separation shall be made when time ends, by the Judge's sentence. The whole Church longs for this separation, when there shall no longer remain to Jesus Christ but His living members; the others shall be cut off by the terrible *Discedite* that our Lord Jesus Christ, in order to finish all things as He has begun them for His Church, shall pronounce in her and with her and by her, the Apostles seated with the elect of God, condemning to the fire all the rebellious angels and all those who have taken part with them and imitated their pride. Then the Church shall take possession of her kingdom, having none but her spiritual members, gathered and separated for ever from all that was impure; a holy city truly, and triumphant, the kingdom of Jesus Christ, reigning with Jesus Christ."[1]

We shall spare the reader further quotation, although there is much more worth quoting in this letter of the illustrious Bishop, on the "Mystery of the Unity of the Church and the Wonders it contains;" but since our space is limited, let us at least add to the words of Bossuet a passage from the greatest of our modern orators, adjuring his hearers to render justice to the Church:

"Understand then what she is, by the unjust sentiments of her enemies; understand, by the wonders of her constitution and her history, that

[1] Bossuet, *Lettres de piété et de direction.* (Fourth letter to a lady at Metz.)

her establishment and perpetuity are not among the works possible to men; understand that all the good accomplished in the world comes from her directly or indirectly; and aspire to become her sons, to be her apostles, to place yourselves among the benefactors of the human race. The time has come; everything is in ruins; we must reconstruct: and the Catholic Church alone can lay the foundation of an edifice that shall abide, because she alone possesses all truth and all love, and because man is too great to be established and saved but by supreme truth and supreme love."[1]

[1] Lacordaire, II. *Conference de Notre-Dame.*

EPILOGUE.

In loving like ourselves, the divine Master has sanctified and almost deified our affections: henceforth we shall love with Him all that binds our heart, if we consent to receive from Him the inspiration and the direction of our power to love. In this He does not restrict that liberty which is the necessary foundation of all friendship; for to protect liberty against itself by the light He throws upon it, and the support He assures it, is not in any way to restrict it. Error and illusion, passion and impulse, are the causes of servitude — and the least free of men is he to whom circumstances allow license. Thus, Jesus Christ is, by the example propounded in the search and possession of the goods of the heart, the best guarantee of the pleasure and honour we find in the acceptance and enjoyment of these goods. All are agreed that love is everything to man in the present life, and, as Père Lacordaire so well says, it is also a question of eternal life or death. For love rules activity — either leads it to the abyss or elevates it to Heaven — degrades it almost to the level of brutes, or exalts it to union with the Divinity. We cannot, therefore, be too grateful to Him who has taught us to love as becomes our dignity as rational creatures, honoured by being called to the supernatural life; and since we can-

not feel this gratitude without an effectual desire to imitate Him, we cannot strive too earnestly to model our life of affection upon His. He has loved all that we could ourselves love, with the difference that beseems His exceptional personality and mission. The obligations of family and country were imposed upon Him: His own free choice brought other attachments in which He freely admitted the bond which united His soul so closely to the souls of Martha and of Magdalen; His mission rendered other friendships necessary, which He graduated as became His prudence and generosity; and — if we would say all — His mercy for sinners and His tenderness towards little children finished the cycle of those manifestations of which the heart is capable. And all were permeated with a perfection that the ancient world could not conceive — not only pagan antiquity, which was incapable of comprehending such a form of love, but even Mosaic antiquity, when friendship always seemed void of finish and completeness, even in its most gracious personifications. When we compare Him with the most vaunted types, He appears so superior that we are surprised at our having ventured the contrast.

No model more perfect could, therefore, be proposed to us, and whoever would be without reproach and without fear in the life of affection, should bear it constantly in mind. For certainly, meditation on these examples cannot but destroy illusions and must, consequently, entail many difficult renunciations. Man always suffers at the

destruction of his illusions, even when he cannot deny their emptiness; moreover, it sometimes costs him much to close his eyes to their attraction when he becomes aware of their dangerous influence. But it costs still more to break unworthy attachments, and far keener is the suffering of regret, if not of useless remorse.

Jesus Christ's ideal of affection is the highest of all, for it is not only close to God, but it is in God Himself, whom the beloved disciple defines by one word, Love![1] In Jesus Christ to love is to will, not only His own good in union with the chosen one, but the good of this being, by their common tendency to his final welfare. But the end of every being, particularly of rational beings, is God — known, loved and served on earth — and possessed in eternal life. Everything, therefore, that impedes or simply retards the ascent towards God in one or other of the friends, is contrary to true affection. But everything is in conformity with the first law of love which increases the power of renouncing the exigencies of sensuality or imagination, and thus renders the soul capable of rising above the flesh, the world, and time, and of entering beforehand into a life of perfect union with the Divinity.

Certainly, these are teachings which all do not understand, the Master Himself tells us;[2] but in the history of Christianity we have many beauti-

[1] I John, IV, 8: "Deus *charitas* est."

[2] Matth., XIX, 11: "All receive not this word, but they to whom it is given."

ful examples of their knowlege and practice, to gladden and encourage refined and generous souls. Filial love, fraternal friendship, conjugal fidelity, affection and devotion of every kind, have peopled Heaven with the elect, after having consoled earth with the example of their constancy in all conditions — under the burning sun or the biting breeze, in the shadows of twilight and dawn as well as in the brightness of the full noonday. They have shed upon corruption and degradation the brilliancy of their splendour and the sweetness of their perfume, to purify them for eternal Truth and Justice; the world, perhaps, exists solely by their favour before God. For such were Sodom and Gomorrha, whose destruction was delayed for one day, by the passing of the Angels who visited their territories.

Without being elevated to these sublime heights, how many other souls, following Jesus Christ, sustain their human dignity upon a level to which, if left to themselves, they could never attain. We must not be afraid to say it; the pride of free thought deludes those only who are content to consider the surface of things, without penetrating their depths. Because of some happy accidents — in which the influence of Jesus Christ may be traced, acting unconsciously on those whom it protects, sometimes even in spite of themselves — must we deny the general weakness of intellect and character? Paganism, which penetrates everywhere, has especially corrupted our life of affection. Marriage, paternity, and the family do not

alone suffer from this mortal poison. Love is reduced to the lowest conditions; friendship no longer soars as of old, and patriotism awakes only by sudden, inefficacious gleams in souls that are too solicitous for their affairs and their pleasures. That society might be able still to defend itself, it should have been filled with the Christian spirit during past centuries; but how long does vigour remain in the veins of the emaciated frame?

Without Jesus Christ love can no longer exist: for love is not the claiming of those satisfactions which only tend to lower at once those who demand them and those who submit to them. The pleasure born of love is due to the constant restraint exercised over selfishness and sensuality, and consequently to those incessant sacrifices made to wisdom and honour. Such is not the sentiment which prevails at the present time, which perhaps speaks more of love and loves less. Purity from early youth, virginity of mind and body, conjugal chastity, fidelity to the vows made before God, paternal dignity — our age has profaned all by the literature or the speech of men whom it proclaims its masters, whom it enriches and clothes with honour, and seats in the councils of national life. A mixture of frivolity and corruption constitutes what is called refined life, giving example and impetus to the lower classes — whence the shame of its vilest complicity recoils on its most honoured names and its highest fortunes.

It is thus that races and nations come to an end. The Athens of Alcibiades, the Rome of the

Caesars, the France of the Regent and of the philosophers, foundered upon this rock. A people that profanes love is near its ruin, which is accomplished by descending, with song upon its lips and garlands on its brows, into the unconsciousness of intoxication. If the divine hand traces upon the walls of the banquet-chamber the *Mane, Thecel, Phares* of Scripture, it is too late to understand and turn the warning to account; the guests are stupified and Balthazar, the sceptic, regards the end of his empire and his destiny alike, with indifference.

Can this ruin be averted before the hour of its fulfilment? Yes, by reforming morals which are the principal, if not the only cause, of progress or decadence. Laws can accomplish nothing except through morals — whence they oftenest proceed and which they sometimes modify, but rarely to their foundation. But morals are measured by the affections, because habits are fashioned after our preferences: it is then in the purifying of the affections, above all in elevating them to the ideal proposed by Jesus Christ, that our hope lies. God has made all nations curable,[1] and we should not be discouraged, but should remember that the salvation of all depends upon the good will of each.

To attempt a general reform of morals, without placing our own beyond reproach, is the error of a mind without foresight or a will without resource. Societies are modelled upon families, whose character is determined by the individual characters of

[1] Sap. I, 14: "Sanabiles (Deus) fecit nationes."

which they are composed, fathers or children, masters or servants. And since morals adhere to beliefs, as to their principle, the convictions of each man are the multiplied roots which nourish the tree and assure its fecundity. We must then return to the faith of Christ, under penalty of the fate of those races whom Saint Paul reproached for being debased by corruption, because they were without affection.[1]

O Christ, Redeemer — Eternal Son of God, made man to save us at the price of Thine own precious blood — divine Friend whom we find by the side of innocence to defend it, of weakness to sustain it, of sadness to console it, of the wavering to encourage them — source of all our joys, of all our merits, of all our repentance — in the name of those whom Thou hast chosen here below, of Mary Thy mother, of Joseph Thy foster-father, of the Baptist Thy Precursor, of Peter Thy Vicar, of Magdalen Thy penitent, of Martha Thy hostess, of John Thy beloved disciple — in the name of Bethlehem Thy cradle, of Jerusalem Thy tomb — preserve us and give us the secret of the knowledge which is in Thee — since to possess it is to have, not only the pledge of its endurance through time, but also throughout eternal life.[2]

[1] Rom., I, 31; — II Tim., III, 3: "Sine affectione."

[2] John, XVII, 3: "And this is life everlasting, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent."

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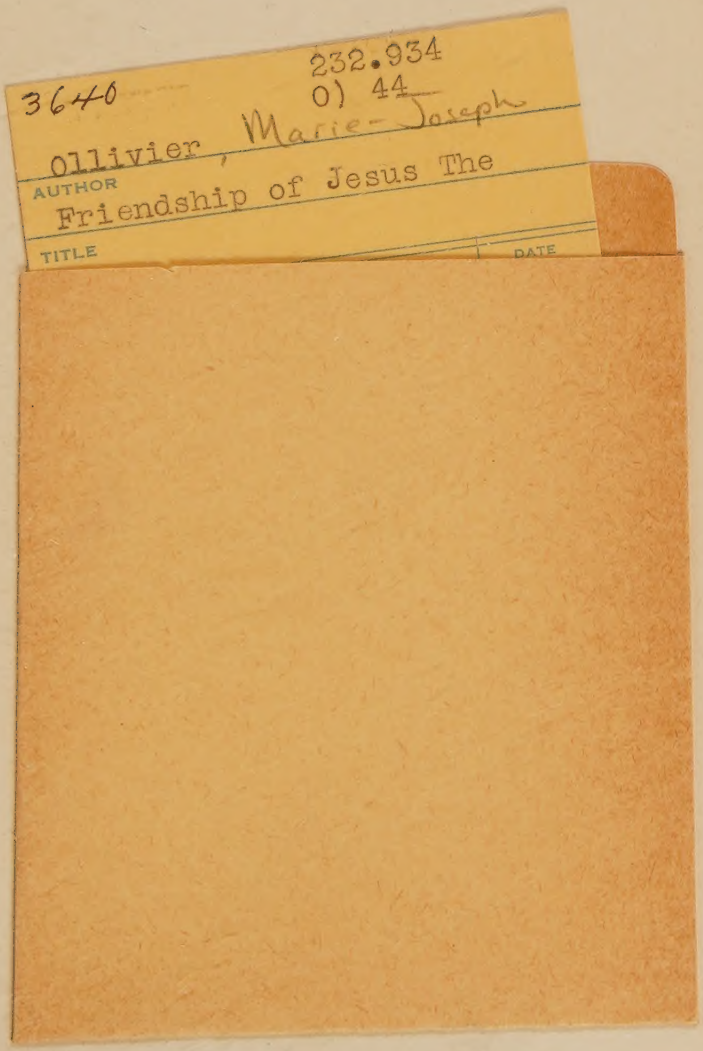
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